

THE Flag of our Union.

LITERATURE

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ARTS

AMUSEMENTS

NEWS

VOL. IX.

F. GLEASON, [CORNER OF TREMONT AND BROMFIELD STS.]

BOSTON, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1854.

TERMS, \$2 00 PER ANNUM, 5 CENTS SINGLE.

No. 36.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THE

WANDERING GUERRILLA: —OR, THE— INFANT BRIDE OF TRUXILLO.

A Mexican Romance of Troublous Times.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

[CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XIV.—[CONTINUED.]

LOOKING quickly in the direction indicated, Francisco saw a body of some dozen horsemen coming from the wood. They were all clad in the uniform of Don Juan Calleja's regiment, and were coming on with drawn swords. "Sirrah, what means this?" asked the lieutenant, turning towards him who had acted as the colonel's second.

"It means that the man who has slain Don Juan Calleja is not a clear," returned the fellow.

"San, you certainly do not," returned the youth, meeting with indignation. "And is this the honor of a Mexican don? By my soul! good fellows, do not fight them, and let us commence by slaying this one!"

But before the lieutenant could reply his attention was attracted by the approach of another party of horsemen from the opposite direction.

"More of the villains!" he instinctively said. "No, no," cried Francisco; "those are men from the mountains! San Jago! they must be friends! Yes—one of them I know—a good man and true. By the hosts, we are safe!"

The horsemen who had first appeared, hesitated when they saw this presence, and at length they came to a full stop, and for some moments they conferred together. The party from the mountains was much the more numerous of the two, and were led by a stout, powerful man, whose face was covered with an enormous beard. They came dashing on at a gallop, and at length the opposite party set forward again. Both Francisco and Aldamar, as well as the colonel's second, watched the coming people with deep interest, and without speaking. Both of the parties arrived upon the spot at the same moment.

"Well and nobly done!" shouted he who led the mountain guerrillas, as he reined up his steed.

"Ha! By the holy saints!" uttered Francisco, catching the deep tones of the voice, "you are—"

"Your friend!" quickly and meaningfully interrupted the mountain leader. "Let that suffice for the present."

The youth understood what was meant, and he kept silence; but he had discovered the powerful man to be none other than Boquilla.

"How now?" exclaimed the guerrilla, turning his flashing eyes upon the leader of those who had come up from the opposite wood.

"What means this?"

"What means what?" returned the other.

"Your appearance here at this time."

"I might ask you the same question, senior brigand."

"By the holy cross, sirrah!" exclaimed Boquilla, at the same time drawing his ponderous sword, "you do well to prevaricate with me; but it shall cost you dear, nevertheless. Answer me, or by Saint Peter you shall bite the dust as your late colonel has done before you! Now, why come ye here?"

"The captain—for a captain's uniform he wore—looked for a moment into the guerrilla's face; and he quailed before the keen glance he met, and in a stammering mood, he replied:

"We have come to remove the body of Don Juan Calleja."

"And is that all?"

"Yes."

"I know you lie, coward!" said the guerrilla, "for I know you came here to take Francisco Moreno away. But you may go. Take the body and be off—and be off quickly, too, for I cannot long bear your sight!"

The soldiers dismounted and lifted the fallen man from the gore-stained turf. His body was

yet warm, but his heart was motionless. The wound he had received was upon the right breast, and the sword that made it had come out under the shoulder. It had nearly stopped bleeding—only bubbling up a little as the body was moved.

"There will be suffering for this," muttered the captain, as he helped to place the body upon the back of one of the horses.

"Come, hasten with your business!" ordered Boquilla. "Work with your hands, and keep your tongue still!"

Ere long the body of Juan Calleja was safely fastened to the saddle, and then the party moved off towards the wood from whence they had come. After they were fairly gone, Boquilla removed the heavy beard from his face, remarking as he did so:

"This is an uncomfortable accompaniment, but a very handy one. Francisco," he continued, leaping from his saddle, and grasping the youth by the hand, "you have proved yourself worthy of your country's love. By the holy apostle Peter, I saw every stroke you made, even at the distance that intervened, and you may be sure that I leaped for very joy when I saw you parry Don Juan's first stroke, for I felt then that the victory was your own."

"But," said our hero, after he had kindly thanked his friend for his solicitude, "tell me how you so opportunely came upon the ground, for I know that I owe my life to you."

"If we had not come, you would surely have been taken to the capital, and you can best judge what would have been your fate. But I will explain. I knew last night that this duel was to come off. One of my trusty spies hung upon Calleja's track all night—has hung upon him since he returned—and we learned that this duel was not only to come off, but that a party of the colonel's men were to be on hand to take you prisoner as soon as the duel was ended—for I think Don Juan had a faint presentiment that he might not be victorious. Of course I could allow no such proceeding as that, and so I came as you see me."

"Boquilla," returned the youth, in a tremulous tone, while he removed his cap and bowed his head. "I only hope that the time may come when I can thank you for this with more than words."

"I understand," said the guerrilla, with a happy, proud look. "I understand it all. But now let's on to the dwelling of Don Miguel, for by the mass, you must find us breakfast this morning."

CHAPTER XV.

PLEDGES.

ISABEL TRUXILLO sat upon the broad verandah, and with clasped hands she gazed off towards the vineyard. She was very pale, and her eyes were set and tearless. Sometimes her lips moved, and then her eyes would turn heavenward, as though she prayed to God for some blessing which lay alone in his power to give. The sun had just arisen above the distant mountains, and the golden beams came dancing about the place where she sat; but she noticed them not. They brought no joy to her then. She only gazed upon the narrow path that led down to the vineyard, and held her hands still firmly above her heart.

At length there came a sound upon her ear. She listened. It was the tread of horses. A little while longer, and she saw a human form through the clustering vines. It was a horseman, and as he came nearer she recognized Boquilla. Behind him appeared another. She gazed wildly—she saw the well known features; and with one low cry of joy she sank back. She would have gazed again, but her eyes were dim, and in a moment more the emotion had checked the current of her outward life. All was dark about her, save one glimmering point where her mind still clung to the face she had seen.

At length the morning's light came to her again. There was a magic touch upon her pale brow—a magic whisper in her ear. She felt

herself raised up, and round about her stout arms were twining. She opened her eyes, and they met the gaze of Francisco Moreno.

"Isabel—my life, my love, I am safe. Look up and be happy."

The maiden saw those features—she heard the joyful words, and with a bursting heart she bowed her head upon her lover's bosom, and the long pent-up tears flowed in big drops down her flushing cheeks.

"You are not killed!" she at length murmured; "you are not hurt!"

"Not in the least, dearest. The Right has triumphed!"

"And Don Juan?" whispered Isabel, shuddering as she spoke.

"Has fallen!"

Isabel bowed her head with a hushed emotion, and when she raised it again her grandfather stood by her side.

Half an hour later, and the whole party were at the breakfast table, Boquilla taking the head. All the circumstances attending the duel had been explained, and Isabel had regained much of her usual composure. Don Miguel was the only one who seemed really downcast; but even he was happy at times. He felt afraid that the wrath of Irtubide might fall upon him, and it was only upon the most earnest assurances of Boquilla that he could be made to feel at all easy upon the subject. He was joyful that Francisco had escaped; and he was happy to think that Calleja was out of the way—it was only that his timidity was worked upon that made him otherwise.

"You say Don Juan was really killed?" he said, turning to Francisco.

"I think he was," returned the youth.

"By my soul, I would not give much for my life were I in his circumstances!" added Aldamar, "He had a stream of daylight clean through his body!"

"True," said Boquilla; "and yet he might live with even that; but I don't think there is much prospect of his recovery. I think Mexico is well rid of him."

"I hope so," responded the lieutenant; "and when all of his kidney go after him we shall be a vast deal better off."

After this the conversation took a more general turn, and ever and anon Don Miguel would gaze upon Boquilla with a keen, searching, inquisitive look. He evidently had a great desire to know more of him. Perhaps the thought was with him that the strange guest might after all be a brigand, for at times he would appear nervous and uneasy. He knew that Irtubide had spies busy in all parts of the empire, and there might be even some about him now. At all events he contrived to make himself as nervous and uncomfortable as possible, and his air in part pervaded the company. They could not be entirely free and happy while their aged host was so evidently ill at ease. On the whole, the meal wore away dull and heavily, and all felt easier when they arose from the table.

Francisco ascertained that Boquilla would remain some time at the house, and then he drew Isabel away and led her out into the great garden. For a long distance they walked on in utter silence; but at length the youth spoke:

"Isabel," he said, "I am thankful for the result of this morning's adventure, but yet I am not wholly happy. There are clouds still about me, and their shadow is upon my path."

"So I feel," murmured the maiden, looking up with fearful eyes. "I cannot tell why, but a strange gloom has settled about me. When I first saw you returning this morning, and heard you first tell your kiss upon my brow, and heard your sweet words, I was frantic with joy. But I am unhappy. It is only a gloom that pervades the atmosphere about me—a gloom that makes me thoughtful and prayerful."

"Alas! my love, it is a season for gloom—not only gloom for you and me, but gloom for our whole country. But there must come stern-er times for us all. So many clouds cannot roll up into the heavens and pass away without a storm. The time must come, Isabel, when the land shall again quake beneath the tramp of the war-horse and the sharp clang of arms. I was talking with Boquilla—he is a wonderful man, and past finding out. I was talking with him, and he says that the imperial throne is even now tottering. There are heart-fires burning all through the land, and the flames must ere long burst forth. Perhaps this very affair of the morning may have a weight that shall be felt throughout the empire, for Calleja was a man of much importance to the tyrant's power."

At this mention of Calleja the maiden again shuddered. The event lay with a heavy weight upon her heart, and she could not shake it off. Francisco noticed it, and he avoided the name afterwards as much as possible.

"Isabel," at length resumed the youth, after they had reached the extremity of the garden, "I must now speak plainly, and of that which

rests nearest to my heart. In the trials that are to come, I know not what part I may be called upon to act, nor where I may be placed, and before we separate now I would know how stand my life-hopes. You know the love that has existed between us. You know how deep is my love for you, and I think I know how deeply you love in return. Such love as ours must be for a life time. Not what shall be our hopes? What shall be my hopes? Shall I look forward, hoping to see the day when I can call you mine for life?—when you shall be all to me, and I all to you?—when we shall be one on earth—one in love—one in hope—one in joy and in sorrow, and one in all things of life? Speak, dearest."

Isabel raised her eyes, and though they were filled with tears, yet she looked happy now.

"You know my love," she murmured, "and that my heart has long been yours. I shall never be happy—truly happy—unless I know that your love is mine. I am all your own, and I hope—for I may hope now—that I can be all to you you would ask."

"Bless you, dearest!" fervently ejaculated the youth, straining the lovely girl to his bosom.

"You speak as I thought you would speak, and happiness is mine. Here, then, let us pledge our vows. Shall it not be so?"

"With my grandfather's consent."

"Of course. I feel assured that he will consent, if he is governed by his own wishes. But I should not speak to him now, for his mind is all warped by fear. He fears to even lift a finger that might bring upon him the least opposition from the emperor, and in this case he may not speak as he feels. Let us understand each other, and when the time comes we will speak with him. Our hearts are already pledged—let our lips give life to the bond."

They sat down upon a moss-grown seat, and there they pledged their souls to a union for life. It was but the speaking of vows which had long had inward life and being, but they both felt happier now that they were spoken, and the season of pure and rational converse that followed was full of such joy as only young hope can afford.

The hours flew by unheeded, and it was not until near noon that the lovers thought of returning to the house.

"Remember," said Francisco, as they approached the dwelling, "we will remain with only hope to cheer us until the clouds have all passed. When all is settled—when the sun once more shines upon our fair land, then will we remember the vows we have this day taken, and act upon them."

Isabel only pressed the arm she held more closely to her bosom, and the glistering tear that stood in her eye told the answer she would have returned. It spoke of the hope she cherished, and of the love she bore. It told all that Francisco could have asked.

Late in the afternoon, Boquilla called our hero one side. The stout man was very sober, and his eyes were moist with emotion.

"Francisco Moreno," he said, "I have ordered my horse, and am about to return to the mountains; but before I go I would say one word to you. It may be a long time ere I shall see you again, for I am soon going to another part of the country. You remember what I told you hurriedly this morning. Our country is not comfortable. The clank of chains is heard all over the land, and the iron links are wearing into the souls of the people. They cannot much longer bear it—they will not bear it. Irtubide grows worse and worse every day of his reign, and his course is more wicked. Now upon such men as you much dependence is to be placed. I know your heart is in the right place, and your mind is clear and strong; should the time come for all patriot hearts to bound into action, will you not be among the number?"

"Ay," uttered the noble youth, with one hand upon his heart, and the other raised heavenward. "I only long to be upon the tyrant's track! At the first call of my country I will enlist under the first patriot banner I can find unfurled!"

"That is the spirit; but you will not have to look far to find the opportunity of enlisting. Among the mountains hereabouts are hundreds of men who would readily flock to such a standard. You, yourself, must raise it. When the hour comes—and you will know well enough when that is, for you will hear the tocsin—you must repair to the mountains, and gather together the bold spirits, who will want a leader. All will know you, and all will gladly join you. How would that suit you?"

"Well—almost too well," returned the youth.

"And yet I think I could lead a body of men where my country needed them without fear of danger."

"I know that, Francisco, and hence have I chosen you to the post. Before I leave I shall see that word is sent to every reliable man, and all you will have to do will be just to present yourself at my cabin. You know where that is!"

"Yes, very well."

"And all you will need to do will be to present yourself there, and you will soon find a bold body of men to follow you."

"But how long ere such a time can come?" asked Francisco, who now regarded the strange guerrilla almost as a fond child would regard a noble parent.

"Ah, that is more than I can tell," returned Boquilla, with a slight shake of the head. "It may be months yet; and," he added, in a low tone, "it may be years. But, be that as it may, when the time comes you shall know of it. I will see that word is sent to you, and at the same time you will receive directions how to move. All I now wish is to know that you can be depended upon."

"If I am alive, and able to move my hand beneath the weight of a sword, you shall not find me wanting."

"Then remember, and let 'God, and OUR NATIVE LAND' be the watchword! Here comes my horse and my men. I may see you again ere long; but whether we ever meet again on earth or not, we will neither of us forget our pledge. Farewell, and may God bless you!"

Boquilla mounted his horse, and his followers drew up behind him. He waved his hand once more to our hero, and then he rode swiftly away from the place. Francisco watched him until he was gone from sight, and after that he turned back towards the house. It is no wonder that his thoughts should now be deep and soul-stirring. He did not stop to question the right of the man who had spoken the thoughts to him, for something within gave him ample proof of that. He only thought how he might best prepare himself to act nobly upon them.

CHAPTER XVI.

A PAINFUL STROKE.

TIME passed on. The summer was gone, and autumn came with its loads of fruit and garner of grain. Don Miguel had heard not a word from the emperor, nor any of his officers, and he had become once more cheerful and happy. Francisco spent much of his time at the house of his old friend, and of course most of that time was spent in Isabel's company. The old man had been informed of the vows the young people had exchanged, and with pleasure dancing in his eyes, had he given his full and free consent.

"Yes, my children," he had said, when he fully understood what was asked, "I give all the power I possess to that end. Be ye one for life, and let your cheerful smiles light up the home of my declining years. I know of nothing it would give me more pleasure to grant—nothing it would give me more pain to see annulled. Bless you, sweet children! May God bless you as I know you will bless me!"

Those were the old man's feelings, and why should not the lovers be happy? They were happy.

Francisco had as yet heard nothing from Boquilla since the day of the duel. The youth had been among the mountains, and he had inquired for him many times, but he could learn nothing of him; none had seen him, and none knew whither he had gone. The youthful hero knew that trouble was brewing, but he could find out nothing definite. At times, he feared that Boquilla was, after all, but an impostor; but such feelings were only temporary. When he remembered the man, and called to mind the noble traits of his character, he banished all such thoughts; and then he sometimes feared that he was himself forgotten—that Boquilla had found some more worthy man to lead the mountain patriots. But there were times, too, when Francisco waited patiently for the coming of the summons he hoped to receive.

So passed away the rainy season, and the calm, cooling, genial weather of a Mexican winter came to take its place. One pleasant afternoon, Isabel Truxillo sat upon the broad verandah, in front of the house, engaged in reading one of the meagre news-papers of the day. She was alone, for her lover had left the day before, and would not return for a week. The air was just cool enough to be bracing and comfortable, and she was enjoying her thoughts in calm tranquillity. The paper which she had was one that had been brought by the post-courier the day before, and she was now seeking for the news. She had read considerable that had but little interest for her, when she at length came upon a paragraph that fastened her attention. It was concerning a rising of rebels in the southeast. One General Santana had arisen, and at the head of a numerous body of men he was threatening to do much mischief. The thought came at once to her mind that her lover might now be called upon to leave her. While she was pondering upon this, her grandfather came out, and she showed him the paragraph in question.

"Suppose Francisco should be called now," she said, as soon as she saw that her grandfathers had finished reading.

"I do not hardly think he will," returned the old man, whose judgment was good when left perfectly free and untried, "I know this Santana," he resumed, "and I do not think he can lead a successful rebellion. He is himself a man of inordinate ambition, and the people will place no confidence in him. He was one of the chief instruments in placing Irtubide in power, but it seems he has turned against him now. The emperor has done something to exasperate him."

"Then you think that this will amount to nothing?" said Isabel, hopefully.

"I do not think it will while Santana is at the head of it," answered the old man; "but they may raise the standard, and then find a better leader."

While they were thus conversing, Isabel noticed a horseman coming up towards the house from the Perote road. She pointed it out to her grandfather, and he, too, saw the same. It soon appeared that there were other horsemen, and as they came nearer they counted seven in all. He who rode in advance was evidently a tall man, and habited in the garb of an imperial officer. Don Miguel turned pale when he saw this, and Isabel was seized with a vague, but terrible fear.

"Who do you think it can be?" tremblingly whispered the maiden.

"I don't know," returned the old man, trembling from head to foot. "But God grant that it be no enemy!"

"But why should an enemy come?" Isabel asked.

"I know not, unless there is some vengeance to be visited upon us for the death of Calleja," Isabel shuddered at the sound of that name, and before she could speak again, Don Miguel continued:

"O, I wish he had not been killed, for I knew that trouble would come out of it!"

The old man's fears were all returned to him, and he gave himself up to the first that presented itself. He did not stop to think, but only jumped upon the first conclusion that his fears excited. He almost felt a halter about his neck, or a dozen bullets, at least, through his body.

Isabel made no reply, for by this time the horsemen had come so near that their faces could be seen. He who rode in advance looked very pale and thin, and the long black looks hung about his neck and temples as though they were heavy and wet. At length they passed beneath the last of the China trees, and Isabel gazed with starting eyes upon him who had fixed her attention. She gazed so until he had alighted from his horse, and then she moved to her grandfather's side, and sank down upon her knees. She uttered a low, deep groan, and clasped her hands tightly together.

"What is it, my child?" uttered Don Miguel, whose eyesight was not now strong.

"See! see!" she exclaimed, pointing to the man who was approaching. "O, it is he!"

Don Miguel looked up, and the new-comer was by his side. He started to his feet, and while his form shook like a lightning-stricken tree, he uttered:

"Heaven save me! Don Juan Calleja!"

"Yes, Don Miguel, it is your old friend Juan Calleja!"

And so it was Don Juan Calleja; but how altered! His face was all pale and wan; his cheeks sunken; his lips cracked, and parched, and blue; his eyes cold and glassy, and his form weak, bent, and tremulous. Yet there was a spark in his eye as he spoke, and upon his cheek came a slight tinge of blood.

"Did you think me dead?" he continued, after waiting a few moments to notice the effect of his coming.

"I did," returned Don Miguel; "but I am glad it is not so. I have suffered much from the thought."

There was a slight curl of scorn about the colonel's lips as he heard this, for he felt pretty well assured that the old man had suffered more through fear than from any love for himself. But he did not speak his thoughts.

"Well," he said, taking a seat near Isabel, but looking towards Don Miguel, "I am alive, though I owe no thanks for it to the young rascal who fought with me. He did his work well, and it has only been through the aid of the most skillful physicians that I have recovered. Ah, I was deceived in young Moreno. He was a great swordsman. But we may meet again; and when we do, his fate shall not be a very light or desirable one!"

As Calleja thus spoke, he turned towards Isabel. She instinctively drew back and shuddered when she found his snake-like eyes fastened upon her. She would have given much to be away—even upon the wild, bleak mountain top, but she dared not move now.

"Fair senorita," the colonel commenced, with a cold, dark smile upon his features, "how feel you upon my unexpected appearance?"

But the poor girl could not answer. She trembled more violently, and her heart was torn by the most terrible fears.

"What!" exclaimed Don Juan, "can you not speak to me?"

"Alas! senor, I know not what to say!" murmured Isabel.

"Can you not say that you are glad to see me?"

The maiden looked up into Calleja's face. Could she answer yes to such a question? She knew she could not.

"Come," continued the colonel, "let me know how I am received."

"I cannot tell that until I know wherefore you have come," at length murmured the poor girl, striving with all her power to appear calm.

"Why, surely, Isabel, you have no question upon that point. By the saints of the holy calendar, I should think you would know why I am here! But yet I can tell you—I have come to get my wife!"

Even the old man clasped his hands in speechless agony now, but Don Juan did not see him—he was too busy in witnessing the effects of his

declaration upon Isabel. She uttered a low cry as she heard his words, and covering her face with her hands she sobbed with an aching, bleeding heart.

"It seems to take you by surprise, my pretty one," the colonel said, laying one hand upon her arm.

Instinctively she shrank away from his touch, and with a flashing eye, she said:

"Do not touch me, senor! I cannot bear the weight of your hand. You may talk—tell me of your purpose—tell of your wishes—of your determinations; but do not touch me!"

"Aha!—you are well posted up!" uttered Calleja, with a deadly look upon his features. "There has been another hand at work here. But," he added, lowering his voice, and speaking in a hissing tone, "you must beware! I love to see a woman of pride and independence, but I do not like to be treated as you have now done. What I do not like I will not have! Look out that you do not make up for yourself a bed which will be most painful to lie upon, for by the holy Saint Paul, I'll make such misery for you that you shall envy the very starving dogs in the street! Beware!"

Isabel had felt her pride aroused when she spoke before, but it was only crushed now. There was something so terrible, so dreadful, so demon-like in the tone and look of the man who spoke to her, that she shrank as she would have shrank from offending the wild tiger. She felt sure that he did not speak idly.

"Alas!" she said, when she next gained the power to speak, "why should you force me to this? How can you wish for a wife who cannot love you?"

"I'll tell you," returned Juan Calleja, with a strangely burning eye, and a darkling, lurking smile. "I'd have it, because it is mine! We are not fond of losing that which belongs to us."

"But how will you find happiness without love?"

"I'll have love! If my wife cannot, or will not love me, she shall at least obey me, and I will seek for love elsewhere. Love is easily found, my fair senorita!"

Again Isabel shuddered, and after gazing for a moment into the face of the man who tortured her, she bowed her head and sobbed aloud. Don Miguel had struck chillingly to his heart, and the misery of his fair grandchild cut him deeply. He gazed upon the suffering girl, and he remembered how much of his own joy she had given to him—he remembered her smiles and her laughter, her merry song, and her cheerful notes of greeting, and for a moment he experienced a gathering of resistance in his soul.

"Don Juan," he said, "this thing must not be. It will kill my poor child, and her blood will be upon my head if I permit it."

"Ah!" uttered Calleja, elevating his eyebrows, and opening his eyes, while a sarcastic smile gathered around his lips. "I was not aware that you had anything at all to do with the matter. Pray, senor, will you be so kind as to inform me wherein lies your power, either for or hindrance?"

"It lies in the fact that she is the only child of my own son, and that to me she was given to protect."

"Ay—to protect, but not to keep. There is a relation stronger than yours, the ties of which even outweigh the bond that unites the parent and child. I am her husband!"

"Not yet!" gasped Don Miguel, looking up with a tremulous expression of consternation, as though he were struggling hard to maintain the part he had undertaken. "You cannot say that you are now her husband."

"I am her husband, and all the powers of earth cannot gainsay it!" returned the colonel, turning a flashing eye upon the aged speaker.

"It may require a further ceremony if I choose, but even without such she is legally and truly mine. Would you deny it?"

"No—no," stammered the old man. "I would not deny it, but I would beg of you to let her remain with me."

"Ay," cried Calleja, with the most marked bitterness and sarcasm, "you would have her stay that she might become the wife of another!—become the wife of the man who would have killed me! By the hopes of my eternal soul, ere I would see that both she and myself should sink into the lowest pit of eternal fire! What! see her given to Francisco Moreno? Ask me to give you my eyes, my hands, my heart—ay, my very soul, ere you ask me that!"

Don Miguel Truxillo had said his say. He could offer no more resistance; he shrank from before the terrible man as the child shrinks from the mind-mad ghost in the dark.

"But come," added the colonel, after he found that Truxillo would make no further reply, "let us retire to the house and forget all that is unpleasant about this affair. I hope it is understood now what my business is, and that I am not to be turned from my purpose. Let matters move along smoothly, and when I reach the capital, the marriage ceremony shall be performed in the emperor's own presence. Come, let us in now, for I am weary."

Don Miguel led the way into the house, and Calleja offered his arm to Isabel as he turned to follow. She hesitated an instant, but her better judgment bade her not do more now to cause further rupture, and she took the proffered arm, but she shuddered when she did so.

After they were seated within the large drawing-room, Don Miguel rang for the servant who waited upon such occasions, and wine and refreshments were soon brought. Calleja drank deeply, and the portion seemed to revive him.

"How long will you remain with us?" asked Truxillo, as he sat down his glass.

"Only till to-morrow," returned Calleja.

"What!—return so soon?"

"I must, for my presence is needed. There is likely to be disturbance in some of the distant districts, and though I am not yet hardly able to bear arms, yet my counsels must be forthcoming. It will be easily quelled, though—only a few rebels have arisen."

"But you will not take Isabel with you so soon?"

"Of course. It is for that I have come, and surely I shall not go away without her!"

Isabel heard, and her heart sickened. Then hope was all gone! She clasped her hand in prayer, and with one mighty effort she hid her wild emotions; but it was the stillness of the freezing night.

CHAPTER XXV.

DON JUAN CALLEJA had indeed complained of his weakness, and indeed he was weak; but before he went he had said to Don Miguel a solemn pledge, which he should all fall to Isabel. He had said, as intimated that by such a course the old man made sure of his life. He said it now mattered little. He was to be the angel of joy, and he cared little for the loss of his property when he was gone.

"And must I go to-morrow?" asked, as Calleja had gone.

"I cannot help it," answered Don Miguel. "Heaven knows I would if I could. But my child, you must go from me!"

Isabel may have hoped that her husband would help her—that he would help her, some assistance, or some suggestion, or some aid, but he did not. He had no hope, and he had no words for cheer—he could only bemoan the dark lot that had fallen upon them. The maiden bade the old man good night, and then she retired to her own room. She set her lamp down upon the table, and then threw herself upon her bed, and there she lay for half an hour. During that half hour she only groaned with the thought of the terrible fate that now wrapped her about like the mantle of night; but at the end of that time a sudden thought came to her mind. It was a startling thought, for she started up from the bed, and stood erect. She swept the long tresses back from her face, and then clasped her hands upon her brow. The tears had all left her eyes, and the pain-marks had nearly left her face, and in their stead had come the firm, wondrous expression that tells of sudden and important impulse.

"O, my soul!" she murmured, gazing upon the burning lamp, as though she sought light upon the subject that had thus unbidden come to her, "why should I stay here? If to-morrow's sun finds me in this place, my earthly doom is forever fixed! If I flee from here, it will not be leaving my poor old grandfather, for I must be torn from him at any rate. Be still, O my heart, and leave me calm to think! Among the mountains I may find safety. O, among the mountains I shall be safe, for some there will know Francisco, and they will lead me to him!"

The subject had come suddenly upon her—for the idea of fleeing from the place had never before occurred to her—but now that it had come, it came with a power that was not to be resisted. And then the last thought—the hope of meeting some one who would conduct her to Francisco—was a vast weight in favor of the plan. She knew that her lover was well known among the mountains, and that all those who dwelt and wandered there were enemies of Calleja and the emperor.

For some time the maiden paced to and fro across the floor of her room, and ever and anon she would stop and gaze down as though some heavier consideration had presented itself. At length she stopped and sat down, and when she did so, her mind was made up. She opened a small inland escutcheon, and having drawn forth pen, ink, and paper, she wrote a note which she addressed to both her grandfather and Calleja. She simply wrote that she had fled, and why she did so; and when it was finished she folded and directed it to them both, and laid it where it would be seen when any one should enter the room. She did this that her grandfather might not be suspected of conniving at her escape.

After this, Isabel knelt down and bowed her head in prayer; and when she had prayed, she arose and prepared the dress she would wear. Of course she selected a dark one, for that would be less easily discovered at night. Having picked out the one she would wear, she proceeded at once to put it on. She did not forget that money would be a very handy thing in case of need, and she took as much gold as she felt safe to carry. Upon her head she placed a close fitting, dark-brown, coral-like hood, and upon her feet the stoutest pair of shoes she had.

After she was thus prepared, she sat down and reflected once more upon the course she was planning to pursue; but she did not falter in her purpose. If there chance to come a thought in opposition, the very face of Don Juan was enough to drive that thought away. No—the mountains were her destination, for she knew how honorable even a brigand could be to a defenceless and suffering maiden. She thought once more of Calleja—of the words he had spoken, and of the character he had shown, and her mind was made up as firm as the very mountain to which she was about to turn.

The large clock in the lower hall struck the hour of midnight. Isabel went to her door and listened. Then she opened it, and passed out into the corridor, and there she listened again; but she heard no sound, save the deep breathing of her own maid who slept in the adjoining room, and whose door was partly open. As soon as she was assured that there was no one stirring in the house, she herself returned to her room and extinguished the light. Then she went back into the corridor, and with a slow, noiseless step, she descended the stairs. In the hall she hesitated a moment, and then moved on towards the back part of the house. She passed through the kitchen, out into the water-room, from there to the wood-house, unlocking all the doors with the keys, which were either in the locks or hanging by the side of the door. One more step, and she was in the open air, and here she stopped beneath the deep shade of the building to look about her.

There was no moon, nor would there be one until near morning, but the sky was cloudless, and the stars shone most brilliantly. The air

was somewhat cool, but by no means was it uncomfortable.

Isabel did not stop long to consider or reflect, but as soon as she felt sure that there was no one near to observe her, she moved along under the shade of the building until she reached the corner, and then moving across into the horse-path, she glided away among the trees. Once she turned; but she felt sure that she was not followed. When she had reached some little distance, she thought she heard the hum of voices in the direction of the stable; but she did not stop to listen—she only hurried on the faster. At length she reached the point where the path separated, and for a moment she hesitated to consider which way she should take. There were three ways from the place where she now stood—one of which was the wide road to Perote, and of course that one she had nothing to do with. The next one, to the left, led directly to the mountains; but it was a hard, rough path. The last, and the one to the extreme left, led to the mountains; but it ran some distance around, striking the road to Guanajuato before it turned up to its higher point.

After a while, Isabel resolved to take the middle path. It was the most difficult, she knew, it was the safest, and would the soonest lead whither she wished to go. She set forward, and taken some dozen steps, when she heard a footfall near her. For a moment she was nearly paralyzed with fear, but on the next she gathered all her strength and bounded forward. It was starlight overhead, to be sure, but there among the stunted trees and shrubbery it was very dark. Isabel turned her head, but she could see no one, though she knew that she was followed, for she heard the coming footsteps. The path was rough and uneven, with stones and uncharted roots in the way, and the poor girl knew that she could not make her way any faster, for several times already had she stumbled. Yet she moved on with all the speed she dared to exercise.

After travelling some seventy-five or eighty rods, she came to a place where the path led down a gentle slope into a sort of basin. She knew the place well, for she had often been there. When she reached the bottom of the basin, she thought to look back, and as she did so, she saw, revealed against the starry sky, the form of a man. With a quick prayer and a leaping heart she started on up the opposite rise. There was no chance for her to hide, for the way was flanked by deep tangled wildwood, full of briars and thorns. If she could only reach a few rods further, she could leave the path. She did not think that her pursuer would have the same opportunity to see her when she reached the top of the rise that she had a few moments before to see him, or she would certainly have contrived some means of working her way in among the wildwood. But it was too late now. She had nearly gained the summit of the opposite slope, when she heard a quick cry behind her, accompanied by the sound of leaping feet. She made one more effort, but it was her last, for on the next moment, a heavy hand was placed upon her shoulder.

"Ha! senorita, I've caught you at last. Let me see your face!"

Instinctively the poor girl struggled, but it was of no avail. In doing so she exposed her face, and as soon as the man saw it, he immediately exclaimed:

"I thought so—the senorita Truxillo. But upon my faith, lady, you take a strange time to ramble in such a place as this!"

"For the love of heaven, senor, do not trifle with me!" uttered Isabel, gazing hard into the man's face, and recognizing him as one who had accompanied Calleja.

"O, I meant not to trifle."

"Then let me go. Do not detain me now. I am fleeing from more than death!"

"I won't detain you, senorita—only I must change the direction of your course a little, and then you may go as fast as you wish."

"Do you mean to take me back?"

"Of course. You don't think I would come so far for nothing."

"One moment, senor. Have you a child?"

"No."

"A sister?"

"Yes—two of them."

"O, then listen to me. Suppose it was your own sister who was thus fleeing from a horrible fate. Suppose her heart was all broken and bleeding—that a fate worse than death hung over her—and laid in your power to avert it. O, would you not do it?"

"That would depend upon circumstances," replied the man, still holding Isabel by the arm. "I am a soldier, and my first duty is to my commander. He has ordered me to convey you to the house from whence you have come. His word is law."

"But it is only human law. There is a law of God, of Heaven—a law in your own heart; O, obey it, and let me go."

"You mistake me, senorita. I know nothing about any laws but such as my commander makes. If there are any others he knows more about than I do, and you had better talk to him about them. So come along. Don't resist, now, for I don't want to hurt you."

The poor girl saw at once that there could be no impression made upon the soldier's heart, and with a deep groan she gave herself up to her fate, and shortly afterwards she was on her way back to the house. They met other soldiers at the forks of the road, and when they reached the house they found both Don Juan and Truxillo upon the veranda.

"Ah, my pretty one," uttered Calleja, with a bitter laugh, as the rays of a lantern shone into her face, "you thought to give me the slip, eh? I thought of this—I mistrusted that you would start off without company, and so I set my men to keep watch. Fortunately, wasn't it?"

Isabel only looked up into the bold man's face, and then she passed on and fled to her own room. Her faithful maid followed her, but she could offer no consolation.

"Go to your bed, Inez, and leave me alone," murmured Isabel. "I would only be left to pray."

The maid spoke not, for she saw that the sorrow was too deep to be reached; so she knelt and kissed the hand of her unfortunate mistress, and then, with her eyes streaming with sympathizing tears, she left the room.

Isabel looked up, and she was alone. Then she clasped her hands and sank down by her bedside, and her prayer was wild and incoherent, for the shaft had shattered her heart.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE COURIER.

It was a week after the events had transpired which were related in the last chapter, and the day, which was drawing towards its close, had been one of unusual splendor. The sun had not yet reached the tops of the tall trees in the west, when Francisco Moreno rode into the yard of Truxillo's dwelling and dismounted from his horse. He allowed his beast to take its accustomed way towards the stable alone, and then he turned towards the piazza. He expected to have seen some friendly face there—some one to greet him—but he did not. The circumstance was strange, for he had left word when he last went away, that he should be back at this time. Surely some one should have remembered it—and if they remembered it, why were they not there to watch for him. This made him uneasy, but why he could not tell.

The youth advanced to the hall, and yet he saw no one—he entered the large drawing-room, but the place was vacant of life. He hesitated a moment, and then he turned his steps towards Don Miguel's library. It was on the second floor, and as he ascended the carpeted stairs each step seemed to give back a hollow, mournful sound which struck heavily upon his soul. Once he stopped, for his heart beat so strangely that it made him weak. There was something about the very atmosphere of the place that seemed like the low voice of the grave. He heard no bustle, no voices, but all was hushed and still. He gazed about to look for some one of whom he could ask the cause of all this, but no one appeared.

Francisco moved on. Slowly and almost noiselessly he approached Don Miguel's door. He hesitated a moment, and then he rapped—lightly, as though he were afraid of the very sound he made—as though it might raise some evil spirit to strike him. He heard a voice from within that bade him enter. He pushed open the door and passed in. Don Miguel sat there alone. He was pale and wan, and upon his furrowed cheeks there were traces of tears. The youth sat down—he spoke a word of greeting, but the old man did not answer him. Then the trembling visitor spoke again:

"Don Miguel, what has happened?" He asked the question in a hoarse whisper.

"Alas!" groaned Truxillo, "I am all alone!"

"Alone!" echoed Francisco, in a hollow voice. "Tell me of it!"

The old man looked up, and after much effort he told of the coming of Juan Calleja—of his purpose, and of his words—of Isabel's escape, and of her capture.

"O," he concluded, "I knew not then how terrible a blow it would be. Calleja tore her away, and all weeping and moaning she went. I begged and prayed, but to no effect. He had no ears to hear, and no heart to feel. He took her from me, and now she is in his hands forever!"

The youth bowed forward till his brow rested upon his hands, and thus he remained for several moments. Then he looked up again, his face was all wet with tears, but they had ceased to flow from his eyes.

"Don Miguel," he said, speaking in a tone of strange, unnatural calmness, "I was not prepared for this—I had hoped—I had thought." His voice was choked, and as he stopped speaking the tears burst forth afresh from his eyes. He could not be calm—it was of no use—for his feelings were not to be controlled.

"Don Miguel," he continued, starting up from his chair, and clasping his hands, "I will follow that villain to the ends of the earth, if he takes his course, for by the Eternal throne of Him who sits on high, I will not rest until I have rescued Isabel if it lies within my power so to do. I can live while she may be saved, but when she is irretrievably lost, then I may die. O, Truxillo, this is very hard to bear; but you have wept, and you will not think my tears bespeak undue weakness. I cannot help weeping."

"Alas, my son, I have wept tears enough to save a repentant nation. None can ever know, save my God and myself, how heavily this blow has fallen upon me. Isabel was the very light of my life, the joy of my home, the smile of my board, the angel of blessing to my soul, and the staff of my declining years. She was part of me, a portion of my inner life, and now that she is gone the lamp of life has gone out with her. I may never recover from the terrible stroke—I am even now upon the verge of the grave. But you, my dear boy, are yet young—you may outgrow the pang."

"O, say not so, my father," returned the youth. "I know I am young, but such a blow shatters the heart so that it cannot be healed. Nothing but Isabel's return to our embrace can make me smile ever again."

"Alas, Francisco, be not too sanguine in the hope you would picture. I have grown calmer now, for I have had time for reflection. Think not that you can wrest our sweet jewel from Calleja's grasp. He holds her with too powerful a hand. By this time he is in the city of Mexico, and perhaps the marriage ceremony has been performed."

"—ah! For the love of heaven, speak not so," interrupted the youth, clasping his hands and sinking down once more into his chair. "Do not picture the thing worse than it may be. I will at once to the capital, and I know that by some means I can gain admission to Don Juan."

"And what then?" asked Truxillo.

"What then?" repeated the youth, with a burning eye. "Ask me not," he added with a

strange shake of the head. "I will see him, and then—"

He stopped. Perhaps his mind was not made up further.

Don Miguel now arose from his chair and crossed over to where Francisco sat. He placed his hand upon the young man's head, and with his eyes turned toward heaven, and his cheeks wet with falling tears, he murmured:

"O, thou God of all things, be with us now. Hold us up in this our bitter trial, and be with her in her sufferings. Listen to us, and smile upon us. O, let the right be done, and let the wrong perish."

As he ceased speaking he bowed his head and wept more profusely, and for a long while no other words were spoken. They both suffered keenly, and they both seemed to be mentally praying. At length Don Miguel turned towards the door.

"Let us walk," he said. "Let us seek the cool, fresh air. I would be calm if I could, for I cannot overcome the fate that lowers upon me. Come, Francisco."

The young man arose and followed his host from the room, and when they reached the piazza the sun had disappeared behind the tree tops. Don Miguel seemed to be upon the point of speaking, when the attention of both was directed towards the road.

"Hark!" uttered Francisco, whose ear was the quickest. "That is the tramp of a horse. Are any of your people out?"

"No, not that I know of."

In a few moments more a horseman could be seen coming on at a swift gallop, and both the old man and the youth gazed upon him in silence until he was near enough to make out his dress. It is not the regular courier," said Truxillo.

"Nor is it a soldier," added Francisco.

"God grant that it be no further evil upon us," the old man ejaculated, fervently.

"There can be nothing worse than has already come," returned the youth.

Before they could speak further the rider had dismounted, and was approaching the place where they stood. He was a middle-aged man, with a frank, open countenance, and habited in the garb of a common hunter. He bowed low as he came upon the piazza, and after looking from one to the other of his friends a moment, he said:

"I seek a young man named Francisco Moreno."

"I am the individual," answered our hero, regarding the stranger with an inquiring glance.

"Then I have a letter for you," and as he spoke he drew forth the missive and handed it to the youth.

Francisco tore open the letter and read as follows:

"To FRANCISCO MORENO.—The time has come when we have often spoken. The day is here, more unscheduled, and the fires of our knowledge. Listen at once to the mountain winds that call to you. Call together all the forces of our people, and with all possible despatch, come to the place where you will find the necessary instructions. All depends now upon you. Our designs are fully discovered, or our movements made known, we must have an effective force regularly organized."

"I have heard of the fate of Isabel Truxillo. Delay not on her account, for I will do all I can for you to wrest her from the villain's power, and I can do much more than you can do. At once to the mountains—raise the standard of the Patriot Guerrilla—gather your brave men, and then hasten to the South."

"For God and our country, BOQUILLA."

After Francisco had read this through the second time, he turned towards the man who brought it, and to him he said:

"I shall obey these instructions at once. Do you know where Boquilla is?"

"Boquilla!" repeated the courier, raising his eyebrows in surprise.

"Ay, the man who sent me this letter."

"I know of no such man. I have heard of some wandering guerrilla by that name, but I know him not."

"Then who gave you this letter?"

"It was one Bernardo, a captain in the Patriot forces."

"Ah, yes, Bernardo. I know him," murmured the youth to himself. "But do you know the contents of this letter?"

"No, only that they are of importance, for I was so told when I took the errand."

"So they are important, and you may tell Bernardo that I shall hasten to obey them. Now come in and have some refreshment and rest, for of course you will not depart until morning."

"I must start on my return immediately, for I have a long distance to travel ere the next rising of the sun. But you can grant me a great favor, nevertheless."

"Name it."

"My horse has been upon the road for the last six-and-thirty hours almost at the top of his speed, and I fear he will not hold out to carry me back as I could wish. If you could exchange horses with me it would benefit me much, and the Patriot cause more. Mine is a noble beast."

Don Miguel at once offered to make the exchange, and while the groom was making the necessary preparations the courier went in and partook of such refreshments as were at hand. In less than half an hour afterwards he was mounted upon a fresh, strong horse, and with a polite adieu he set off upon his journey back.

"Now I must be off," said Francisco, after the courier had taken his departure.

"Not to-night, my son," returned Don Miguel, earnestly.

"Yes, I must be among the mountains and have my couriers out before morning."

"And then I shall be indeed left all alone!" the old man uttered, with much feeling.

"But you must remember the cause," quickly replied the youth, at the same time laying his hand upon his old friend's arm. "It is a most

sacred duty I go to perform—a duty I owe to myself, my country, and my God. You will not repine."

"Of course you must go, and, perhaps, if you succeed—if you overcome the tyrant emperor—you may bring back—"

"Isabel, you mean," said the youth.

"Yes, yes," the old man added, while fresh tears started to his eyes.

"I hope I shall be able to do that," resumed Francisco. "I know not how you feel, but for my part I place great confidence in the words of Boquilla, so much so, at least, that I shall go about my other duty, fully believing that he will do more for Isabel than I could possibly do."

"God grant that he may," was the old man's fervent ejaculation.

In an hour afterwards our hero was on his way to the mountains, and he was armed, too, in a way well befitting a guerrilla leader—not alone with arms to overcome the lives of the enemy, but with those necessary to the solidity of his own command. Don Miguel had given him near five thousand dollars with which to pay his way with his troops if necessary.

By midnight the youth reached the cot where Boquilla had resided, and there he found Tepe, and several others of the mountain rangers. He told them of the letter he had received from Boquilla, and that he was ready to set out as soon as the men could be got together. "And," he added, "you may inform the men that they shall be sure of ample pay, for if it is not obtained from the government I will pay them from my own pocket."

Messengers at once set out to different parts of the mountains, and by the hour of sunrise two hundred stout men, all well-mounted and armed, were ready to set out. Francisco received them with a proud eye, and when all was ready he placed himself at their head and commenced to lead the way down the mountain.

[CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK.]

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

IN MEMORIAM.

By JAMES LOMBARD.

She sleeps that quiet sleep,
For which earth's wearies ones are vainly sighing,
While flowers, like angels, keep
Mute vigil round the spot where she is lying,
And leaves that quiver in the tree overhead,
Wave low, sad dirges for the tranquil dead.

The grave in silence holds
The form that moved so lately in our presence,
While memory still enfolds
That form which once made her life a pleasure;
O, not the shroud, the coffin, and the pall,
Can sleep affliction in their gloomy thrall.

Serenely o'er her fall
The mantle of the mistiest one of heaven,
And dies the vesper bell,
In low, sweet echoes on the air of even;
No unguished spirit mured the voiceless clay,
As sped the spirit to the realm of day.

How delicate and deep
The fount of feeling in that gentle spirit;
So ready eye to weep
With those who pain and sorrow here inherit;
Or joy with those who feel the thrilling bliss
That wakes the soul to purer earthly bliss.

By soul, as few indeed,
Her outer life was comprehensive duty;
And fewer still could read
The finer feelings of her nature truly;
But they who held a place in her esteem,
Found friendship full, a clear unfailing stream.

Sad is the world to view,
Since to the grave, in sorrow, they consigned her—
The worshipped of the few,
Fond, loving hearts that all too deeply shined her—
Who built the altar of their human trust
On what could fade, and found their ideal dust:

We leave her to her rest—
The poor, tired body, to its mother's keeping;
Her spirit with the blest,
Whose cards are adorned with no voice of weeping.
Peace to the dead! Eternity is fraught
With glories which transcend our highest thought!

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

NANCY.

By GEO. CANNING HILL.

Just within the leafy porch of a charming little cottage, betraying itself by the narrow path that streaked the turf and wound around through the shrubbery, nestled the snug cottage of Mrs. Miller. It was a spot capable of challenging the traveller's envy. I shall enter no further upon a description of it than to say, that on every side it was hedged in with luxuriant foliage; that a clear brook swam along within sight of the humble door; and that wild vines, together with gray and golden mosses, abundantly fringed its low and unpretending roof.

It was about the twilight of a sweet and dreamy evening in summer, that two persons sat talking together in low voices on a fallen tree-trunk within the edge of the shadows. The air was soft, and all the evening sounds were in harmony. The young moon, still in her crescent horn, sailed like a silvery boat through the heavens, scarcely glinting among the leaves, and the delicate spray, yet attracting magnetically the eyes of the two lovers.

"I must return to town to-morrow morning!" That was just what the young man had come at that particular hour to communicate.

"To-morrow!" exclaimed the tender thing at his side. "Not so soon, Henry!"

"It is imperative, Nancy. I have come this evening only to bid you farewell. I would stay, if I could; but that is impossible. Nancy, I shall see you again, you know."

"Again?" It was an undisguised tone of astonishment, as well as of fear.

"Yes, I hope very soon," said he. "Be patient here a little while without me, in this quiet spot. I shall feel but all the happier, in knowing that you are safe. Harm cannot reach you here."

She suddenly let go his hand, and pressed her own with its open palm to her eyes. In another moment, the glittering tears were falling through her fingers.

"Why, what now, Nancy? What is the matter? Are you not well?"

She sobbed audibly.

"Tell me what it is," he insisted.

Like the trusting girl that she was, she laid her head submissively on his shoulder, and answered in broken words:

"You are going to leave!"

"Yes, but it is necessary. Business calls me home. I shall soon see you again."

"How can I tell that? What may happen to you, I do not know. Perhaps I shall never see you again!"—and the thought provoked fresh tears.

"You suspect me of—no, no, Nancy! I never thought you would do that!"

"Why may I not go with you, Henry?" she asked, appearing not to heed his broken remarks.

"Go with me?" he seemed really astonished at the proposal.

"Yes; and then if anything befalls you, I shall be near to help you. O, I would rather give worlds, than have any harm happen to you! May I not go with you, dear Henry?"

"No, Nancy; that is impossible. If it could be so, I should certainly have been the first to propose it. It will not do for me to take you among my friends yet. You know the situation of things well, for I have often told you of them all. By-and-by, Nancy. Try to be happy here until I return to claim you."

"Ah!" she sighed involuntarily; "but how shall I know when that 'by-and-by' will come? It will be so long to me here alone. I shall have no one to talk with, when you are gone; and mother, you know—"

She stopped here, as if a dark thought clouded her mind.

"Yes, yes, I suppose I know," returned he. "But you must not speak to her of me, Nancy. She does not like me any too well, I know. But what is that to me? Nothing. So, Nancy, try to be as cheerful as you can; all will come out bright finally."

He kissed her, while she clung to him and wept; and in another moment had taken his departure.

The girl sat a long time on the log, the sport of her tempestuous feelings.

But the man, who had with wondrously trifled with the purest and freshest feelings of her heart, said aloud to himself, as he reached a little dell just beyond:

"Well! I am glad to get off! I thought at first I should have more trouble. But it's well enough as it is. Only a pleasant episode in my summer's experience! That is all! Why must I necessarily think I must be serious about it? Because she's so much given up to the dream, it's not so much reason why I should be, certainly!"

And walking on in the direction of the village inn, thus did the faithless trifler think to assure himself again.

"Have you been with Mr. Dalton to-night, Nancy?" her mother gently inquired of her, as she opened the cottage door.

The girl made no reply, but sat down in sad silence near the open window.

"I fear, Nancy," said her mother, "I fear more than I dare tell you now. I would caution you; but you will not listen. You have had little experience, my child."

"But he has always told me that he loves me," was her reply.

"And you, therefore, think he does?"

"Mother, how can I question a word he utters, when he is so earnest in his talk with me? I know that he loves me!"

"If he has sincerely told you so, Nancy, I certainly hope he does. Now let him take the steps necessary to prove it. We are poor; he is rich. He has every advantage over us in society. Then if he truly loves you, he will be anxious to make such sacrifices as will best prove it. Do you not see that, Nancy?"

No answer; but the girl plucked the leaves of the rose-vines that sheltered the window, as if her mind was filled with thoughts.

"Does he say anything of me, Nancy?"

"No, mother, only that you—you—"

"Well, what?"

"That you do not like him!"

"Well, and why should I? I am waiting for him to explain his intentions. Let him first do that: I think he will know then whether I really like him or not."

Nancy said no more. But her mother seemed quite unwilling to let the subject drop, and kept up a desultory train of remarks upon it for some time, now enlarging on the many and unsuspecting snares there were all over the world, especially for the humble and defenceless ones, and now bewailing the accidents that may so suddenly rob a widow of the love of her only child.

The latter was so much affected with both the remarks and her own bitter reflections, that she went off immediately to her room, without even bidding her mother her usual "good night."

Many were the succeeding days, in which there was no pleasure for either of the two hearts in that humble household. The mother was depressed with the weight of her great anxiety; the daughter secretly pined for the happiness that had already reached to the very verge of her lips, and then receded like flowing waters so cruelly.

Weeks went round. Early autumn time was at hand. Nature began to give signs of decay, and the fading and falling leaf awakened new and deeper sources of sorrow in the young girl's heart.

She was sitting alone on the low door-step, on another evening. So long had she been accustomed to keep her thoughts to herself, that she had become almost a solitary. The secret bond that had so long held her to the heart of her mother now seemed strained apart, and broken.

She was pondering upon her future; darkly pondering. A new purpose had taken control of her soul.

She would flee secretly from home,—leave all she had held so dear, behind her,—break asunder forever, if need be, the links that always had connected her with the objects of her love,—and follow after him whom she worshipped in her inner heart above all! A terrible, truly terrible purpose for one so young and so frail, and so completely ignorant of all that pertains to the

thriving life into which she was about to plunge; but her energies were equal to its development.

It was in the gray of the early dawn, then, that she slipped unperceived out through the cottage door, and took her way down the forest road below. Once—twice she stopped a moment, to look just another time at the receding cottage that for all her life hitherto, had held her hopes and her happiness. The windows grew dimmer and dimmer; and finally slunk away, with the roof and all, in the lengthening distance. She drew a deep sigh; and, while a glittering tear-drop fell to the ground at her feet, nervously anew with the courage that was to carry her through all.

A long—long day, indeed. Only a few pieces of silver in her pocket which she had been carefully saving for months; and these would take her to the metropolis, and procure her lodgings for perhaps one or two nights. The low state of her finances, however, was the very last subject that troubled her mind. Her thoughts were strained to purposes and hopes that forbade their descending to matters of such secondary interest; albeit, in one way, they might be matters of the first interest to her yet.

She reached the station at which the cars were to take her up. It was many, many miles from her home, and when she arrived there, she was weary with walking. With a feeling, then, of thankfulness, she threw herself into the seat in the car, and gave herself up to the fears and hopes that ran swift races, even with the lightning-like train that bore her on.

It was the middle of the afternoon, when she arrived at her journey's end, and a mild, melancholy afternoon in autumn, when her thoughts went back mournfully, yet pleasantly, to the familiar scenes about her quiet home, and her memories rose up with subtle and searching influences before her. She alighted and began crowding along down the street in the same direction so many were going.

Now she commenced her search, a thoroughly hopeless one, it would seem, to any one else; but by no means such to her. She ran her eyes rapidly over every face that passed her own. Quick as thought itself she successively canvassed the several claims of each countenance to her recognition, and rejected them. Now her eyes lit up with a wondrous lustre indeed; and now it sank down, like a living flame, into the ashes of her faith and hope.

She walked on, and walked on. It seemed to her that there was to be no end of the streets. The people swam by her in thousands; so that her brain began to grow dizzy with the changing, shifting spectacle. The shop windows bewildered her with the glitter of their splendid shows. Voices of men, and women, and children, rang confusedly in her ears; and, joined with the steady roar and rattle of the cars, went to create a perfect *maelstrom* of sound for her brain, in which were wrecked and temporarily drowned all the plans and thoughts she had ever cherished—save only one.

That one was respecting her lover.

No, no; she could not be separated from him. She must be with him; be where she could look lovingly into his eyes every day; and hang enraptured on the blissful intonations of his very voice; and tell him continually all her fears, all her feelings, all her wants, and her deepest and quickest sympathies. She must live and move only in the magnetism of his immediate presence and influence. How dearly she loved him, what tongue could ever begin to tell! How continually her thoughts were upon him, how devotedly her feelings hovered around him by night and by day—who was there in the wide world to know as well as she! She would sacrifice everything now that was dear to her, for his sake. Her thoughts vaguely endeavored to seek out some strange and unheard-of enterprise, by which she might the more perfectly prove the genuineness of her devotion.

And thus she walked, and walked continually.

She, the helpless and innocent child of quietude, fresh from the nest in which she had brooded from the storms of the outer world all her life—she wandered alone in the thronged streets of the great town. There were no friends about her, on either hand. She was a perfect stranger in the rush of the great world. Everything amazed her. Every sound confused her. The town sights—varied, innumerable and bewildering—nearly sufficed to throw her mind from its wonted balance. And it might, indeed, save for the fact that she held continually true to her single, fixed plan, not for a moment swerving to either the right hand or to the left. That purpose was—to find him to whom her heart had married itself long ago and forever!

After face came and went. If, at first, she was struck with the great variety of countenances that met her gaze, at the last, she began equally to wonder at their marvellous resemblances. Figure after figure went by. Elegant ladies, richly attired, and beggars and rag pickers jostling them on the pavement. Men on their way to their hotels, their clubs, or their families, to dinner; and boys whistling dogs after them, calling to each other in play, and stopping here and there to study the shows in the dazzling windows.

Now she felt hope revive within her; and now it seemed to go out altogether. At one moment she felt sure that the vision she had seen in her dreams so long, was at last really before her eyes; and at the next, she would experience a sense of friendlessness and desolation that threatened to prostrate her at full length across the pavement.

Suddenly she started. Her beautiful limbs, just now all weary and languid with exertion so long continued, in an instant sprang into their old condition of harmony. Her figure was erect. Grace sat upon her, and made her a queen. Her eye was all a glow with delight. The blood rushed in a swift torrent to her face. Her mouth was wreathed with a pleasant smile, as of greeting.

What was it that so started her? Had she been so fortunate as to see unexpectedly to meet with the face whose image lived continually in her heart?

Yes, it was her lover himself! He was walk-

ing slowly forward in her direction. Soon he would be up with her.

A lady was at his side towards whom his head inclined and with whom he seemed conversing quite gaily. She betrayed the delight she felt at the moment, by the expression of her fine countenance. Nancy just glanced at her; but that was all. She looked again to read the heart of her lover.

She thrust her little bundle under her thin shawl, and approached him with as much excitement of manner as if she were sure of a most kind and welcome reception. Her hand was half put forth already. Such a sweet and sympathetic look as her face, for a brief moment wore, it would be impossible to convey in words to any reader.

She looked straight into his face. Their eyes accidentally met. Nancy was just about to speak—to throw out her arms—to express, even in ejaculations, the extreme joy the moment had brought to her.

A cold, chilling, repulsive look of his, suddenly succeeding to the one of awakened surprise, drove quickly back the sympathies with which she was ready to accost him, and froze her to the spot!

She could not stir. She seemed rooted to the place she stood upon. The blood left her face as suddenly as if she had mangled it, and she had the pallor of a corpse.

There was that look still before her swimming eyes—cold, forbidding, cruel! It crushed out the life suddenly from her young heart, and left her another being than what a moment before she had been. He had recognized her; that was certain. Yet, he refused to know her publicly. He turned away from her sweet look with an expression of bitter scorn.

She even thought her ears bore concurrent testimony with her eyes. She thought she heard the companion of his hand ask if that poor girl was not a natural beauty; and the answer, sneering, unmanly, and terribly cruel, rang in her ears like water in the ear of a drowning person.

Where—where was she to go? A wraith on the highway of the world, where should she find a haven and rest.

Her heart went back instantaneously to the mother whom she had deserted. Yes, the mother is always the last and best resort! She pictures that mother, still bowed with the weight of her new affliction; and standing there on the sidewalk of the great town, she longed for only the wings of a dove, that she might fly away and be at rest in her bosom again.

It was long after twilight, and after the rows of lamps had been lighted on either side of the streets, that she found herself in an obscurity of whose circumference or centre, she knew nothing. She was lost in the on-coming darkness, and in the labyrinth of streets and lanes. As she went on, now gazing this way and now that, and all the time nursing the secret that had well nigh destroyed her existence already, a woman, poorly clad and suffering under the effects of an unusual excitement, suddenly accosted her.

"O, for the love of my poor heart, give me pity, give me pity!"

Here was a sufferer like herself. The resemblance struck a quick and sensitive chord of sympathy. She immediately followed on close behind the stranger, though without a word, and ascended several flights of stairs, around a corner.

Into a room, small, low and darkened, with but a single window for the admission of the light, and but ill supplied with the necessary articles of furniture, they found their way. The woman drew a match across the wall, and lit the remaining piece of a candle on the little stand. She did everything in silence, and when her work of preparation was complete, she beckoned Nancy to her.

The latter obeyed the summons, and approached the bed. Slowly the distressed woman drew back the covering and exposed the face of a dead child—a little girl—to the gaze of the astonished stranger! Instantly she broke forth in a series of the most pitiful moans and groanings it is possible to conceive. She threw herself again and again across her babe, bewailing the cruel and remorseless fate that had separated them. With tears streaming down her haggard cheeks, she rehearsed the history of her darling's life, dwelling with a most tender minuteness on all its trifling traits and foibles, and weeping over the brief story of its death. By turns she wept and prayed. Now she lost herself in soliloquy, and now she broke beyond all the bounds of self-restraint, and gave herself up to the passionate sorrow that ruled her.

Nancy stood and witnessed, and listened, till she grew agitated beyond description. She tried words of sympathy for this poor, distracted woman; but they were but faint and feeble at best. She, too, remembered the deep affection of her own mother for herself; and her heart bled afresh at the thought of it came over her.

She managed to obtain some small degree of rest in that humble apartment of suffering, until the day dawned; and then, pressing in silence and tears, the hand of her distracted benefactress, she left the place forever, with its lesson of sorrow in her heart.

It was scarce dusk again, on that same day, when she glided like an apparition into the little cottage of her mother. That mother received her,—O, how gladly!—but the returned one could not lift the load from her heart again. Once she was free; now givings upon her freshest feelings; her affections uncontaminated and never silted. Now what was she? She dared not tell, even to herself in thought, what she was!

There is a mound, all overgrown with grass and daisies, within sight of that little cottage window. It was heaped over the body that lies below, in the early spring.

What do they say, those that pass the spot oftentimes?

"That there lies a poor broken-hearted girl!"

And for once, indeed, the world has guessed it truly. There have been broken hearts before now; and this was one of the saddest of them all. It was the heart of poor Nancy!

(Written for The Flag of our Union.)

ESTELLE:

—OR—

THE PEARL NECKLACE.

BY MRS. M. E. ROBINSON.

In a small village, a few leagues from Paris, lived an honest peasant called Jaquet, whose wife was familiarly known as Mother Missette. The former was a hard working, inoffensive man, but ignorant; the latter was more intelligent and better educated than most of her class, and had gained considerable influence among the surrounding peasantry. Hers was a sympathizing nature, who had a cheering smile and a kind word for all.

One night as she sat thoughtfully gazing into the fire, while beside her was a cradle, in which lay a young child, a gentle knock fell upon her ear. It was late, but Mother Missette was not timid and immediately opened the door.

A well-dressed man entered, bearing an object in his arms which he carefully deposited on a large arm-chair.

"Look at it," he said, in a respectful tone. The good woman cautiously opened the folds of an ample cloak, and beheld a beautiful infant. She started back in surprise.

"The child is confided to your care; she is called Estelle. Her parents are well-born; at some future time she will be claimed. They have good reason to know you are kind, honest and virtuous; that you will guard her from moral as well as physical evils."

"By what name are the parents known?" asked Mother Missette.

"I am forbidden to tell. But do not fear, my good woman; the child need not blush for its parentage. Here is a purse of gold; when it is exhausted, more will be forthcoming."

Mother Missette drew off the cloak wrapped about the sleeping infant. She glanced inquiringly at the stranger as she remarked the richness of its clothing.

"That finery must be put out of the way; it will only attract attention. You will know best what is proper, under the present circumstances."

The woman stood a moment without speaking, as though considering the proposal.

"You do not hesitate?" said the man, with a concerned expression.

"I am fearful I shall not satisfy—that it may not be for the best. We cannot read the future," she replied, irresolutely.

"True; but be assured you shall suffer no loss by bestowing a mother's care on this innocent one. I would she could pass as your own child," he added, turning abruptly to mark the effect his words might produce.

"That cannot be," was the quick reply, as she pointed to the cradle which the stranger had not observed.

The latter looked disappointed, but seeing her manner was decisive, did not urge the point. "The child wears a pearl necklace," he continued, after a pause. "Preserve it religiously; do not part with it on any consideration. It is highly valued, as a family memorial."

The good woman bent over to examine the ornament. It was of exquisite design. A locket was attached to it by a small gold chain, which, to all appearance, contained a miniature. When Mother Missette looked around, the stranger had disappeared.

"Gone!" she exclaimed.

At that moment the child opened its eyes, looked up in her face and smiled, as though imploring her protection in its helplessness.

The kind-hearted woman took it up, kissed its dimpled cheek affectionately, and inwardly resolved it should never lack a mother's care. She would divide her heart's treasures between the little Estelle and her own Lucine.

Jaquet was not particularly pleased at finding his family so unexpectedly increased; but his good humor returned by learning that the child was amply provided for.

A sad event occurred next morning. The infant daughter—the loved Lucine—sickened suddenly and died. The mother grieved sorely, but weeping would not give life to the dead. At length her saddened thoughts turned to the stranger child. It seemed providentially sent to fill the void in her heart. With an inexpressible yearning she clasped the little Estelle to her bosom, and from that hour the child knew no other parent. It was no difficult matter to pass it off as her own. The simple peasants had no suspicions, and although it was remarked that Mother Missette looked pale and sad, no one knew the loss she had sustained.

In infancy, Estelle was singularly beautiful, and as years rolled on, they but added to her loveliness. Slight in figure, but of faultless proportions, dark-eyed and dark haired, she was a model specimen of brunette beauty. Amiable, artless and unselfish, she won all hearts, and called for general admiration.

But once had Mother Missette heard of the stranger who had left the child in her keeping. About twelve months after his first appearance, a well filled purse was thrown in at her open door, with a note which merely said that her conduct had been satisfactory, and that the mother would soon visit her child.

Years passed away and she came not. The good woman was obliged to believe Estelle's friends had forsaken her, for she vainly looked for any tidings from them. Yet she was as thoughtful of her young charge as ever, reliving her such instruction as her means would allow. She loved Estelle as she had Lucine; she knew no difference. The worthy Jaquet had suddenly deceased, and Missette was thankful God had given her so good a daughter for her solace.

One day Mother Missette and Estelle sat by an open window. The latter was now fifteen years of age, and able to be of some assistance. At this time her work lay untouched, her usually nimble fingers were idle, while her dark, pensive eyes were fixed on the floor. At length she said:

"I dreamed last night, mother."

"Don't you every night," replied the woman, pleasantly.

"But this was not a common vagary of sleep, resumed the young girl. 'I thought we lived in a large chateau with grand old trees about it. The staircase was wide, the rooms high, there were corridors and saloons, we had servants to wait on us, and everything was very magnificent. O I should like to live in just such a place!'"

Mother Missette glanced at the lovely speaker in concern. "You are discontented, then?"

"O no, my mother; but that was such a pleasant dream, I have thought of it much. I even remember the large pictures that looked down on me from the wall. One of them was a beautiful lady, who seemed to regard me so tenderly that I loved her at once."

Missette felt uneasy. Why did the girl have such fancies. Were her intuitions whispering the truth? "Such imaginary things are of no account; they should be forgotten."

"I suppose so," said Estelle, sadly. "And yet," she added, her countenance brightening as she spoke, "and yet who knows but some day we shall have plenty of money, and not have to work so hard?"

"Don't talk about it any more, my child. Sing to me," returned Mother Missette, anxious to change the subject. "I like your singing better than your dreaming."

Estelle smiled, and did as she was requested. At first, the tones were of surpassing softness and sweetness, then they grew louder and clearer, and anon the melody filled the room.

"I love to sing, dear mother," said Estelle, as the last echo died away. "I cannot express myself in any other way. It makes me happier, happier. My spirit seems to speak in a language of its own, while every pulse thrills with delight as I strive to give it utterance."

Missette was about replying, when her eyes rested upon the figure of a man near the window. As she looked up, he came forward.

"I could not avoid listening to such rare music. I have been too much charmed to move," he said, courteously.

Estelle colored, and her companion invited him to enter.

"A wonderful voice," he observed, seating himself.

"Do you think so?" replied the woman.

"I never heard it excelled. If she could have good instruction, neither of you would be obliged to do that hard work any longer," he added.

"O how nice that would be!" exclaimed Estelle.

"You will spoil the child, monsieur," said Mother Missette, with slight coldness, resuming her work.

"I should be sorry to do that. I do but speak the truth," returned the gentleman, warmly. "I should like to hear mademoiselle sing again. I am a great lover of music."

The young girl looked at her mother.

"Sing, my child," said the latter.

Again a strain of delicious harmony delighted the ears of monsieur. He bent forward eagerly, lest he should lose one of the bird-like tones. "Excellent, excellent!" he exclaimed, when Estelle had ceased, and was timidly looking at his face, which certainly expressed wonder and admiration.

"My good woman," resumed the gentleman, turning to Mother Missette, after a moment's pause, "such a voice was not given to your child for no purpose. She is capable of becoming a distinguished prima donna. I am manager of—-theatre, and ought to know something about these things. Permit her to go with me. I will procure her the best masters that Paris can afford, at my own expense, and in two years she will be prepared to earn herself a name and a fortune. Do not decide without thought," he added, perceiving that she was about to reply in the negative. "Look at the matter deliberately. Reflect on my offer, and give me an answer in a week's time."

Thanking Estelle for her kindness in gratifying him, and bowing low to Mother Missette, he departed.

Estelle sighed, looked wistfully in the direction he had taken, and hoped he would come again. Missette was silent for some time. When the proposition had first been made, she was on the point of giving an indignant refusal. A little reflection made her pause. She remembered Jaquet was dead, that time was already silencing her own hairs. Who would protect the girl when she was gone? Might not her wondrous beauty prove a fatal gift to her? These thoughts passed rapidly through her mind. The kind woman had always cherished a secret hope that Estelle would one day occupy her true position. She was aware that the girl had an uncommonly fine voice. From infancy she had warbled like a nightingale, making ill-humor vanish, and dull days pass cheerily. But whether this gift could be turned to account was a question. Perhaps the unknown had overrated her powers. But then, if Estelle succeeded, she would be placed beyond the reach of want, and better able to take care of herself, should she be left without a protector. She might attract some attention, and by that means her parentage be discovered. This last thought had more weight with Mother Missette than all the rest. Estelle should decide.

"Estelle, my child, what are you thinking of?" she asked, looking searchingly at the fair girl.

"I was singing, in imagination to a large audience," replied Estelle, frankly.

"Foolish one!" exclaimed Missette, in a playful manner. "Do not look so sad. I am not displeased. You are younger than I am, and look at things in a different light. But, my dear," she continued, speaking more seriously, "it is for you to say how we are to reply to this strange gentleman. It shall be as you wish."

"Then let us go," said Estelle, with vivacity. "I have so longed to see Paris. You will be with me, and I shall fear nothing. I will study hard and earn much money that your declining years may be made comfortable."

The point was determined; they would try their fortunes in Paris.

True to his word, Monsieur Delonde—as he announced himself—made his appearance at the appointed time. He heard their decision with no little joy.

"We go on this condition, only," said the woman; "that we shall not be separated."

No such sacrifice being demanded, Mother Missette felt more at ease. A few weeks found the two females comfortably installed in Paris. Estelle was at once put under the tuition of an excellent master, and initiated into a course of scientific training.

Nearly three years passed on. It was the night of her debut. Clad in simple white, with a few natural flowers in her dark hair, Estelle stood before Missette, who gazed on her with fond pride for a moment, and then took from a small box the necklace which had been left in her keeping. Estelle looked at it with curiosity.

"It has a miniature within. Examine it. Estelle touched a spring and the locket opened. "It is like the picture of the lady that I saw in my dream!" she exclaimed. "The same in beautiful smile, the same loving face as that O, where did you get it, my mother?"

"Some time I will tell you all about it. Think now of what is before you. Act naturally, and you will act well. If your courage wavers, think of this picture and be strong. You will sing admirably—I am sure of it."

Mother Missette smiled on her fair charge, kissed her tenderly, and abruptly left the room.

Estelle glanced again at the miniature, pressed it hastily to her lips, and then closing it, gave her hand to Monsieur Delonde, who at that moment made his appearance.

The curtain drew up, and the young debutante was led upon the stage. Rapturous applause greeted her appearance, followed by a deep silence. For a moment, she was perplexed and irresolute. The timid glance she cast at the audience, assured her that all eyes were fixed on her. Her youth and beauty had already secured the approbation of the house, but of that she was ignorant. For the first time she seemed to feel the crushing responsibility of her situation.

She averted her gaze before so many glasses and curious faces, and wished she was again beneath the humble roof of Mother Missette. Thoughts rushed through her mind like lightning—she lived an hour in a second.

"Courage!" said the kind voice of Delonde, as the orchestra played a few bars. The little word acted upon her like magic. Her bosom throbbed once more with hope—her brain thrilled with the inspiration of song. Raising her eyes, she broke the oppressive silence. Her voice, tremulous and weak at first, soon swelled into full and delightful notes, and gaining confidence as she went on, had conquered the diffidence of a first appearance.

Estelle forgot that thousands gazed upon her. Her slight figure seemed to grow taller, her chest heaved, and she gave herself up to the inspiring theme. She sang wonderfully. The applause was enthusiastic, and a general buzz of admiration gave evidence that the audience could appreciate true genius.

The young girl had indeed achieved a triumph, but the approval of Mother Missette, the worthy manager, and her high old teacher, was valued more highly than anything else.

Now, of course, the fair prima-donna had many admirers. Much perfumed note paper was wasted by the inditing of numberless epistles, all couched in extravagant language, and begging the honor of an introduction, while some contained jewels of value, which the debutante was desired to wear at the next opera.

These numerous offerings necessarily reached Mother Missette's delonte, who, agreeably to Mother Missette's request, invariably declined giving her address, well knowing that the society of most of the disappointed applicants would do her no good. Estelle laughed at the missives, and returned the ornaments with polite assurances that she did not accept presents.

One day Estelle, closely veiled, sought the residence of her kind master. She did not notice, on her return, that a young man watched her steps, and surveyed the house attentively which she entered.

This was Paul Treville, the adopted son of a nobleman of wealth and influence. He also had been fascinated by the charming prima donna, and had been eager to make her acquaintance. By chance he had learned what so many were anxious to know, but he was too honorable to take an undue advantage of the circumstance.

His wishes were soon after realized, however. He met Delonde, Mother Missette, and Estelle one morning on a public promenade, and the former, who knew his name and high moral character, made him known to his companions. He was invited to call upon them; and one visit succeeded another, until he saw Estelle daily.

Paul Treville was endowed with rare musical talents himself; possessing a voice, deep, rich and melodious, he and Estelle passed many pleasant hours in practising duets together. Monsieur Delonde had his head full of business, and good Mother Missette—simple soul—seeing the maiden was happy and content, went quietly on with her netting in a corner; and so neither suspected the two young people might take it into their heads to fall in love with each other. But they did notwithstanding, although the kind woman was a long time in coming to a knowledge of the fact. One day Paul found Estelle looking extremely unhappy.

"I must practise alone in future," she said, in reply to his anxious inquiries. "I have been imprudent; I should not have seen you so often. My mother has talked to me very kindly, and I must be governed by her advice; but I feel very miserable about it."

"What was her advice?" asked Treville, striving to speak calmly.

"That I should see you no more."

"Does she know anything towards you?"

"I tried to tell her," answered Estelle, averting her eyes, "but she does not think as you do."

"Paul," she added, looking down, "do not attempt to see me again, if you can. Remember what you are, and what Monsieur Delonde's son, and a peasant's daughter. Think what a gulf there is between us, and do not try to cross it."

"You have beauty, talent, worth, genius, and an inherent nobility of soul. What care I for more?" exclaimed Treville, vehemently.

"But your father, Paul—the Count de Beaumont," said Estelle, laying her small hand upon the young man's arm.

Treville's countenance assumed a disconsolate expression; he recalled the prejudices of his benefactor against those of low origin, and was confident he would never recognize Estelle as a daughter-in-law. Paul was too truthful to deceive the maiden in the slightest degree by any false statement.

A long conversation followed, which did not serve to make matters look more hopeful, and Paul Treville, who was a full believer in the maxim "that what can be done to-day ought not to be put off till the morrow," left Estelle and sought his father, to learn just how much opposition he might expect to encounter.

"I have come," said the young man, deferentially, "to speak to you on a subject of importance."

"In love, perhaps," retorted De Beaumont, turning a searching look upon Paul.

"Unfortunately, that is true," replied he.

"Well, who is she—a grisette, a ballet dancer, a third-rate actress, or an opera singer?" asked the count, somewhat contemptuously.

"A prima-donna," said Paul, in a penitent tone.

"A prima-donna!" exclaimed De Beaumont, dropping the book he had been reading.

"An angelic creature, I assure you," Paul ventured to remark, without looking up.

"Perhaps you think of marrying her?" pursued the count.

"With your consent," rejoined Treville.

"Of course I shall not withhold my consent; but I shall have to look up some worthy person to inherit my name and fortune."

"Ah, my benefactor, you should see her before you condemn her! She sings divinely!"

"The less you will need my name and estate, then," retorted Beaumont.

"Promise me you will see and hear her, before you give this matter serious thought."

"Such prodigies are not so rare that I need put myself out to see them," returned the other. "This one is so rare that it would be worth going a hundred leagues to see."

"It has affected your senses already," said the count, compassionately.

"Will you go?" resumed Treville.

"Yes, I will go. My carriage shall be at the door at the proper hour. So dress yourself like a monkey, and make yourself ridiculous with perfumery, that your silly tricks may attract the eyes of your charmer, and your borrowed ambrosia delight her olfactory."

Paul was well pleased with this consent, although so ungraciously given; and for he was fully persuaded that the young prima donna would carry the count's good opinion by storm.

Estelle had again charmed the Parisians.—Count De Beaumont and Paul Treville sat in a front box. The latter had expected to suffer his companion's railery, but to his satisfaction he was silent, with his eyes fixed intently upon the beautiful singer.

The attention of our hero was divided between the stage and De Beaumont. The contemptuous smile that had curled his lip, on his entrance, had given place to a singular play of features. Doubt, curiosity, interest, each in turn was dominant upon his countenance. Between the pieces he rested his head on his hand, and mused deeply.

The young man did not understand De Beaumont's mood; he was not sure whether it would be prudent to propound questions. So after making a few observations, which were very briefly answered, by the nobleman, Paul concluded to await some farther demonstration.

The carriage drove up, and the two stepped in. The senior gentleman drew his hat over his face, and the junior leaned back in a corner to think of one who was every day becoming dearer to him. Not a word was said until they reached home, and Paul was about to take his leave for the night; then Beaumont spoke.

"I would speak with this prima donna," he said briefly. "Where can she be found?"

Treville was at first too much astonished at this unexpected request, to make an immediate rejoinder.

"You do not reply," added the count.

"Excuse me," said Paul, slightly confused. "She has rooms at the Rue St.—"

"That is sufficient. Good night."

De Beaumont turned away, and Paul Treville repaired to his own apartment. That night he slept but little, for he could not forget the singular conduct of his friend and benefactor. In vain he taxed his imagination for some reasonable cause of the strong interest Estelle had excited in the bosom of the count. He awoke in the morning with such thoughts still in his mind, nor could he dismiss them. His watch had stopped during the night, and he was ignorant of the time; but he did think to ask the servant who came to bring his breakfast, so that when he had paced his room for an hour, it seemed to him two; and he began to be impatient for Beaumont's return, even before he knew certain whether he had left his chamber.

Leaving the nobleman's adopted son to battle with his impatience as successfully as he can, we will visit Estelle. At an early hour, Delonde came to inform her that a middle-aged, respectable looking gentleman begged the favor of a few moments' conversation.

"You are aware that I do not often see strangers, Monsieur Delonde. What is his business?" she inquired.

"I can form no conjecture, or rather nothing but conjectures in relation to that. Judging from his appearance, you need not hesitate about giving him an interview."

"I trust it all to your judgment, monsieur; I believe it has never misled me. If you think proper, to admit him, do so," returned Estelle.

"Let him come up," said Missette. "I will remain here."

Presently the door was thrown open by a servant, and a gentleman of distinguished deportment was ushered in. He bowed politely to the prima-donna, who had arisen at his entrance, and begged her to be seated. Blushing, she complied, somewhat intimidated by the courtly bearing of her unknown visitor.

"Pardon me, mademoiselle," said the visitor, "nor imagine I came here merely to stare you out of countenance. I heard you sing last night. You acquitted yourself nobly, but I have not come to fill your ears with fulsome flattery. You wore a pearl necklace, which I now see lying upon the table. Allow me the liberty, if you please, of examining it for a moment. The workmanship appeared to me very curious—being somewhat of a connoisseur in such matters."

Missette inspired a deep breath, and grew deadly pale; and her hand trembled exceedingly as she passed the necklace and locket to the stranger.

It was now Estelle's turn to be amazed, and she timidly raised her eyes to the gentleman's varying countenance, who with nervous haste now opened the locket.

"Mon Dieu!" he cried, with startling earnestness, and was in the act of carrying the picture to his lips, but suddenly checked himself. "May I ask," he added hurriedly, "if this is a picture of yourself?"

"No, monsieur."

"Then, for heaven's sake, tell me whose it is."

"That indeed I do not know," rejoined Estelle.

"You trifle with me! It must be your mother's," added the visitor, much agitated.

"No; my mother has the honor of being before you," answered Estelle, pointing at Missette.

"It is false!" he exclaimed energetically. "This is a likeness of her who was your mother. Nature herself endorses this assertion, for you are her living counterpart. It was your resemblance to her, that so riveted my attention upon you last night."

"Trust me, monsieur, you are deceiving yourself," resumed our heroine, with some firmness. "How came this in your possession?"

"I never saw it until the night of my debut, when my mother placed it upon my neck."

"I will prove my words true," he said, with increasing agitation. "On the reverse of this locket is a secret spring."

"I know of none," said Estelle, whose voice was now quite tremulous, and whose countenance expressed more interest than she had avowed.

"When I touch this secret spring," resumed the stranger, "the reverse side of the locket will open, and display, engraved these words: 'Estelle De Beaumont, born July 10th, 1824.'"

"I have never seen them," returned the maiden, who had now quite lost her self-possession.

"What does all this portend!" she exclaimed, glancing wildly at the necklace, the stranger and Missette; for the agitation of the latter could no longer pass unnoticed.

"It means that you are the daughter of the Count and Countess De Beaumont," he replied. "No, no; this is but a wild vagary, here is my mother; she can say. Mother, speak to this gentleman! say that I am your own daughter!"

"I cannot!" gasped Missette.

"I knew it!" exclaimed the stranger.

"Who are you?" said Missette, in a choked voice.

"I am De Beaumont—her father," he answered.

"Yes, it must be true," added Missette.

"Do you hear that, my child! Have you no embrace—no word of greeting for your father?"

But De Beaumont's words fell upon insensible ears; Estelle had swooned. The count caught her in his arms, and while he was pressing her convulsively to his heart, Paul Treville entered unannounced. He stood amazed. What had transpired? Why was Estelle in De Beaumont's arms? He advanced a few paces, and looked beseechingly at Mother Missette.

"Estelle has fainted a father," said the latter, in answer to his mute entreaty.

"I was informed that her father was dead."

"I am her father," said Beaumont, abruptly.

"You are confounded, and I will explain the mystery. I wedded Estelle's mother clandestinely, without the consent of her parents. Her brother and an intimate friend of mine were the only witnesses of the compact. One daughter was born; that marriage, whose birth we deemed necessary to keep secret. At a tender age, she was entrusted to the care of my wife's brother, who found, as he thought, a safe retreat for her, and a careful nurse. Not long after this event, being an officer in the army, I was sent on active service in a long campaign. In my absence, my fair young wife died. When returned, after three years, I learned that my brother-in-law had gone to America, with Lafayette, and had been slain in an engagement. Thus, I had lost all due to my daughter. Last night, at the opera, the prima-donna's resemblance to my deceased countess attracted my attention, and afterward the pearl necklace, which had once belonged in my family; for, on account of its peculiar workmanship, I thought I could not be mistaken in regard to its former ownership. Nor did the evidence cease here; for her voice was that of my sainted Estelle, who was happily gifted with the power of song. So much was my curiosity excited, that it led to this visit, and the present denouncement."

Estelle, who had heard the greater part of this narrative, now opened her eyes and smiled faintly upon Treville; and Delonde having entered, the same story was related to him, after which Mother Missette gave those incidents in the life of her adopted daughter, which the reader already knows.

De Beaumont conducted the whole party to his chateau, where the chain of evidence was rendered complete by a full length picture of his wife (corresponding to the likeness in the locket), and sundry documents in his possession.

When our heroine found a father, the musical world lost one of its brightest ornaments; for she never appeared again in public.

De Beaumont forgot his prejudice against prima donnas, and when Paul archly asked him if he had yet "looked up a more worthy heir," he shook his finger at him playfully, and referred him to his daughter, for an answer to that impertinent question. The response which he received was given at the altar some months afterwards.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

WASHINGTON.

BY WILLIAM L. LAWRENCE.

The founder of a nation, great
By any 'neath the sun,
Which, in its onward, upward course,
A glorious race hath run.

A name which evermore must live,
And ever brighter grow,
Till nation after nation proud,
Shall be in dust laid low.

Revered sills by scholars wise,
By princes and by kings;
Where thy fond name doth greet our ears,
What pride its mention brings!

An honest pride! that one man lives,
And not for self alone;
But for the country of his birth,
So brightly, purely shown.

And where, on history's varied page
Can such a man be found?
O one, a mighty conqueror,
With victory's laurel bound—

Who did not side on all the power
Which Fortune's hand conferred;
Or was by love of country, e'er
From tyranny deterred?

None can be found! not one of all
Who lived on earth before;
And not another will arise,
Ere Time shall be no more!

Yet, though the stars and stripes may cease
To wave 'neath Freedom's sun,
Will be revered—almost adored,
The name of Washington.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

EUDORA OF POMPEII.
A TALE OF THE EARLY MARTYRS.

BY M. V. ST. LEON.

Is one of the most spacious streets of Pompeii, stood the mansion of the haughty, wealthy patrician, Marcus Aurelian. Passing through the entrance, you entered a large, handsome hall, with a colonnade of white marble and a tessellated pavement. In this apartment were received tradesmen and visitors of inferior rank, who were not permitted to approach the centre of the room, but were restricted to the margin of the pavement. Here a slave was constantly in waiting, and as his office was a responsible one, he was much looked up to by his fellow-slaves; bed chambers opened from three sides of this hall, and at the further end on the right and left, were small rooms devoted to the use of the ladies of the family.

Leading from one side was the dining-room, and from the other a cabinet; also a passage to the further parts of the house for the slaves, answering to the back stairs of the present day. These rooms all opened on to a portico, oblong in shape, its marble columns wreathed with garlands; this was called the *peristyle*, and contained a fountain surrounded by vases of flowers. At the further end was another dining-room, on either side of which were chambers and a picture gallery; these rooms communicated with another oblong space, with columns on three sides, and resembling the *peristyle*. This was the garden, containing perfumed fountains, statues and innumerable exotics.

In a chamber adjoining the second dining-room, and which opened into the garden, sat the Lady Eudora, only child of Marcus Aurelian. Across the entrance which led into a bed-chamber or *cubiculum*, was suspended a rose colored curtain embroidered with gold flowers. The walls were covered with vivid and dazzling frescoes, and on the floor, in front of the toilet table of citron wood inlaid with gold, and covered with vases of perfume, and rich ornaments, lay a mat of glowing hues from the Persian looms. Close by it stood a large, oval mirror of polished steel reaching to the floor, and supported on swinging hinges by two ivory graces. On an exquisitely carved marble stand was a richly chased silver ewer and basin. Near by was a tall, slender flower stalk of silver, surmounted by a large ivory lily, in which reclined a slumbering Eros, while Psyche bent over him, a lamp filled with perfumed oil in her hand. The time was afternoon, and the weather being sultry, the door which led into the garden was open, the only aperture for light which the room contained. The fair occupant was idly musing and occasionally played with her little, sandalled foot with the tiny, silken spangle on the carpet before her. Presently a step was heard in the next room, and the curtain was lifted by a female slave somewhat advanced in years.

"Ah, Massena, what is the time?"
"The day wanes and it is nearly sunset."
"Thinkest thou, Massena, our frequent visits to the congregation have been noted?"
"I think not, but why dost thou inquire?"
"A strange presentiment has shadowed my soul of late, and I much fear some dark evil will fall upon me."

"*Di avertite omen—the gods forbid!*" replied the attendant, for though recently converted to the Christian faith, the ancient heathen exorcisms were ever rising to her lips, to her grief and vexation. At this moment a slave announced the Lady Athenais."

"Save my Eudora," said the visitor, returning her friend's embrace; "why hast thou not been my guest for this long while?"

"Nay, Athenais, it is surely longer since thou has visited me—down, Chloris!"—continued she, as the little spangle caught the robe of her friend in its joy; "see, the pretty creature has not forgotten one of her earliest pretences. Has thy brother Julian returned to the city?"

"No—but he wrote in his last message that his heart remained in Pompeii, though his body was in Athens, and he desired his dearest, fondest remembrance and wishes to thee."

"Ah, my Athenais, there is little need of desiring my remembrance of him, surrounded as I am by the tokens of his affection; but when didst thou receive his message?"

"Seven days since, and we daily look for his return. Thou must not allow so long an interval to elapse between thy visits to me, my Eudora, as thou hast lately, lest I should fear thy affection for Athenais is declining."

"Say not so, my dearest friend. None among my acquaintance do I so gladly welcome as thyself, but I have not felt well the last few days, and I dreaded restore thee, my Eudora. I will return home to send thee a potion I value highly, and come to thee to-morrow, again. *Vale!*"

When the footsteps of her friend had died away, Eudora again sank into a reverie, but presently, accompanied by the frolicsome Chloris, she rambled into the garden. The Lady Athenais, as her name indicates, was of Greek birth, and a native of Athens though now residing at Pompeii, and Eudora was betrothed to Julian, who was now absent on a journey. Eudora had within a short space of time become a Nazarene, by stealth, and bitterly did she mourn that her beloved was an idolater, a follower of the general religion of that day. The congregation of which Eudora was a member, met secretly in a house in the suburbs, and thither she was going that very night. Accordingly, as soon as evening set in, attended by Massena, and wrapped in large mantles, Eudora set forth on her errand.

The slave who guarded the atrium, supposed them to be bound for the garden, and when they arrived at the gate, the porter, whose duty it was to be constantly in waiting, was nowhere to be seen. Congratulating themselves on escaping the curiosity of the slave, they entered into the open street. Past the gay, glittering shops of the perfumers; brilliantly lighted streets full of bustling people, past groups assembled on the steps of the temple porticos, listening to some story teller, or singer; past shady walks nearly deserted, down to the side of the river Sarnus, the two pursued their way, unheeding the dark figure that followed them, hidden by the overshadowing trees. On the brink of the river they hailed a boatman, entered the solitary bark, pulled down the stream, and, sailing, entered a dark, miserable alley that led down to the water. They traversed several other streets, and presently stopped in front of the closed door of an apparently deserted mansion.

Knocking three several and distinct times, the door opened from within, and they were noiselessly admitted. Crossing the solitary atrium, in which there was no attendant, as was usual in all other houses, they halted at the threshold of the adjoining room, and accompanied a second knock with the words, "Peace be with you!" A voice returned, "Peace be with whom?"

"The faithful," answered Eudora, and immediately the door was opened.

The apartment into which the two were admitted was large and perfectly plain. Contrary to the universal custom of the lively citizens of Pompeii, the walls and ceiling were unadorned with dazzling frescoes, parti-colored columns, or embroideries. At the further end of this hall on a slight elevation, stood a large crucifix, and in the centre of the pavement were several rows of seats ranged in a semicircle fronting the cross. The only light was cast from a bronze lamp suspended from the ceiling. There were already assembled quite a number, and Eudora with Massena, before accosting any person present, knelt, and fixing their gaze upon the crucifix, offered a silent prayer. In a little while there entered an aged man whose long, silvery beard and feeble steps indicated him to have already past the usual boundary of mortal life; yet in that mild countenance of childlike simplicity, in the still clear and bright blue eyes, dwelt a serene and holy light, as if the smile of God had rested there, and the peace thereof had never departed.

Slowly advancing to a seat below the cross, and which fronted the congregation, he unfolded a scroll and read several chapters, the members assembled commenting upon them, or listening to the explanations of their aged pastor. At the conclusion of the lecture, the Lord's Prayer was said by the whole congregation, and afterwards a hymn was sung, in which the clear, silvery tones of Eudora were distinguishable. At its close, the members dispersed, with the exception of Eudora and Massena, who accompanied their pastor to the interior of the apartments, and seated themselves in the portico that opened into the garden. The moon was just rising, and in silence they watched its gradual ascent over the tropics.

"Thou wert not at the last gathering, Eudora," at length said the aged man, breaking the stillness that had reigned.

"No, father, I could not find an opportunity to leave the house unnoticed. It troubles me, this constant deception towards so kind a parent as mine, and the only one I have to. I am sometimes tempted to remain at home always from our meetings, but I cannot resolve in earnest to do so—but indeed it pains me to disobey one whom I love so much."

"He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me," Whoso shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven; therefore fear not, but boldly and firmly follow the path you have chosen."

"Truly, father, I stand rebuked, but I am as yet a new disciple, and these doctrines seem strange to me at times."

"Wert thou not thinking of Julian this evening when we were so silent?" inquired Apollonius.

"I was so—and what would I not give if he might be persuaded to become a Christian. I cannot believe but he will yet be converted."

"The Lord in his own good time will work out the salvation of his people."

"I doubt it not," eagerly replied the enthusiastic girl. "I am convinced he will, and I am thankful to be so gently and pleasantly led in the paths of truth. But the night dew is falling fast," she continued, after a pause, "the stars are all out, and the health of our shepherd is too precious to his flock to thus expose it; had we not better enter the house?"

"They nourish this poor body when the soul longs to flee away and be at rest—but it is the

will of my Master that I bide here yet a little longer," and supported by his young companion he entered the dwelling. The aged pastor while the Saviour was on earth, had been among his followers, and had listened to the sacred instructions, becoming so impressed with them, that at the time of the persecutions to which the early Christians were subjected, he remained true to his faith and the little band of believers, many of whom fell martyrs to the cause. In a few years he was with one accord elected to the office of the "shepherd of the flock," and though he would have declined the responsibility, the members would not permit it, for no one could so well fill the place as Apollonius.

Eudora and Massena hastily retraced their steps towards home, for they had oversteered their usual time, and were fearful of detection. In silence they passed through the crowded streets again, and gained the garden gate. The porter was not there, and with a sense of relief at their unusual good fortune, they hurried in, and sought their apartments. Scarcely had they laid aside their coverings when a summons came to the Lady Eudora from her father. Trembling in every limb, she hastened to obey the request, for she feared some evil, and entering the inner dining-room, seated herself at her father's feet.

"And where has my Eudora been roaming?" he tenderly inquired, smoothing the silken tresses of his beautiful child.

"Roaming, father?"

"Yes, my daughter—a friend of mine says he hath seen thee in the streets late in the evening; nay, he even affirmed he saw thee this very night."

"The porter can inform thee on that subject, my father," and she clasped her hands. A little slave entered and his mistress ordered him to send Diomed to them; with a low bow he left the room and the porter appeared, a stout, dark-browed, sulky looking fellow.

"Who has passed through the gate since dusk?" demanded Eudora.

"No one, lady."

"Art sure?"

"I have not stirred from my post since sunset, and no one has entered."

"Enough, you are permitted to retire." When he was out of hearing, Eudora turned, and said, "Thou seest, my father, how much to be depended upon is the statement thou hast heard."

"It is false, my child, and yet thou art sometimes absent at the worship of our household—how comes it?"

Eudora's heart beat rapidly, and discovery seemed more terrible as it drew nearer, but sensible some answer must be given, she replied: "Can we not worship with as much sincerity when abroad, as when at the altar?"

"The gods forbid you should become an apostate, but that sentiment savors strongly of opinions, more heretical than our religion permits—beware of expressing such sentiments to every one, lest they mistake you for a Nazarene."

Ere the trembling girl could reply, a young and handsome man entered the apartment. With an exclamation of surprise, and pleasure, the father and daughter arose.

"Save my Julian," said the proud senator, grasping the hand of the new comer, who returned the salute with much warmth. Eudora, though more guarded in speech, and concealing her joy more than her father, betrayed by her bright blush, and smiling, sparkling eyes, sufficient pleasure to satisfy even her betrothed.

"When didst thou return?" inquired Marcus Aurelian.

"But this very hour; I found our mansion deserted by my father and Athenais, and deemed they might be here."

"Thy sister was with me but this afternoon," replied Eudora, "but departed before sunset, and I doubt not ere this, has returned from the Via Domitiana, where our citizens are wont to congregate at evening, and a mischievous smile told the young man that his betrothed fancied she was giving him no information he had not possessed before. Shortly after Julian rose to leave them, and turning to Eudora said, 'Athenais, in her last letter, proposed a pleasure excursion to celebrate my return; it shall be to-morrow—will thou join us?'"

"Most willingly, my dear friend, and my singing maiden shall accompany us, if thou wilt—give to Athenais and thy little sister my best wishes, and take a portion for thyself."

"Thanks, dearest Eudora, for thy kindness. I will not neglect to deliver thy message—*Vale!*"

As soon as possible, Eudora sought Massena, and related what had occurred, together with her presentiment that discovery was near at hand. Massena endeavored to cheer her mistress and persuade her it was but fancy.

"The person who has seen me—he must have followed us, and if so we are in great peril," replied Eudora.

"I do not think any one has observed or watched us."

"How comes it then he is so well acquainted with my actions? and it is likely he would rest without ascertaining whether our frequent visits tend? and should we have been discovered?"

"The only thing we can do is to be more circumspect, and yet that is a difficult task."

"I fear the porter is not so faithful as he should be, for he declared no one had passed out or in this evening, and further he said he had not quitted his post an instant, which I know to be false."

"It would seem impossible we could have been unnoticed—I never liked his looks, his countenance is bad, and he may be aware of our entrance, yet choose to conceal it for reasons of his own—yet why he should do so—"

"Strange! I was thinking myself of the same thing and—"

"Hark! Is not some one calling thy name, lady?" Eudora listened.

"I believe you are right, I will go instantly—meanwhile it were best to ascertain whether we were seen by Diomed or not." Descending to the garden below, she met Julian.

"What art thou here?" she exclaimed in some surprise.

"Yes, didst thou not hear me call thy name? I have much to say to thee, Eudora, and on one

subject particularly. Lucius hath told me that thou hast attended the meetings of the Nazarenes; can this be so?" he continued, gazing imploringly upon her. There was a severe struggle for an instant in the poor girl's heart, and then she said in a firm, though sad voice:

"Julian! I will not deceive thee. It is even as thou hast heard."

"O Eudora! I disbelieved the statement, and would still have so but for thy confirmation. Art thou aware of thy danger?"

"Am I not, thinkest thou, when I know it may cost my Julian's love? But too well do I know it, yet I am resolved to bear all."

"When didst thou first attend these meetings?"

"At intervals for nearly a year."

"So long! How hast thou escaped discovery?"

"I have always worn a mantle and thick veil."

"Then how wast thou discovered by Lucius at last?"

"I know not—it is that which surprised me—stay, I have it!" she eagerly exclaimed; "it was late when Massena and I returned from the meetings, and though we were silent in the street, we conversed freely in the shady lane leading to the house, without a thought of any one's presence, and it must have been Lucius was near, and heard our conversation."

"I should think, had he been at so little distance, thou wouldst have noted him, but O," he continued earnestly, "do not follow this wild fancy till it end in thy ruin—for what is this religion? A thing of yesterday as it were—for, sake not the worship of the gods, the faith of our ancestors. It can only bring disgrace on thee, and shame to thy friends."

"It is useless, my Julian, to urge me to forsake the faith in which I have found so much of happiness—I will never renounce it." At this instant a shadow fell before the place where they stood, and then the moon again covered the spot with her light.

"Julian," whispered Eudora in a frightful tone, "didst thou note that shadow?"

"A shadow? I saw none."

"But I did," and she continued to gaze on the same spot as if expecting the sight again.

"Nay, my Eudora, it was but the trees flickering across the path."

"I tell thee it was the outline of a human figure. I could not have been so mistaken—there," seizing his arm and pointing down the walk. Julian caught a glimpse of a form, quickly stealing away through the shrubbery.

"Ha villain! caitiff!" he exclaimed, rushing in amongst the trees, "I command thee to stay!" But the only answer was the echo of his own voice, and then an unearthly ringing laugh seemed to reverberate from all sides, and mingle with the sighing wind.

Julian gazed over the level space that extended some distance without any means of concealment—not a living object met his eye, nothing but the wide, open plain, and pursuit being useless, he retraced his steps to Eudora, who nearly overcame with terror, and fearing for Julian's safety in rashly pursuing the listener, was leaning against the pedestal of a marble statue that was scarcely whiter than herself.

"Have you discovered the person?" inquired Eudora.

"No—I looked intently upon the plain but I saw nothing—no signs of life."

"Nevertheless it was some one who cast the shadow."

"O my Eudora! thou art discovered—thou art lost!"

"Alas! where can I secrete myself—I shall not be safe even in my father's house."

"I think, however, thou hadst best return thither—it will seem like guilt indeed, to fly at the approach of danger."

They accordingly returned to the house, and Julian folding Eudora to his heart, exclaimed—"The gods protect thee, my beloved!" and in another instant he was gone. Eudora sought an upper chamber in which to pass the night, as the evening was sultry. For some time she sought in vain for repose, but at length she sank into a deep sleep, and soon after a dark dream entered her brain; it seemed to her like gazing at a play in which she saw herself, for in the same chamber where she lay sleeping, lay her counterpart, also sleeping. In this dream the door softly opened, and Diomed cautiously entered, shading a lamp which he held; he cast a fearful glance around the apartment, and then stole with catlike tread across the room—

"Hark!" he mutters, "where should it be—I remember right, in this very place," and applying his fingers to a panel, it slid across, leaving an open space, or small closet.

Eagerly he drew from thence various articles, but seemingly disappointed in his search he shook his head and exclaimed: "No, no, can it be elsewhere?" At last he appears satisfied, and takes up some object—a copy of the Scriptures, written on the finest vellum, and enclosed in gold bands. But in searching for this, the other things have become disordered, and while Diomed endeavors to replace them, another spring on the further wall of the closet flies open, disclosing a stair-case, the extent of which was not discernible amid the darkness.

Uttering an exclamation of surprise, the slave peered into the unfathomable gloom. Impelled by curiosity, he entered the aperture, unthinking that his silhouette slipped from his belt. Taking the precaution to close this panel after him, he descended the narrow, winding stairs; great care was requisite, however, for in some places the steps were anything but firm, time having fulfilled his duty well. Arriving at the foot of the staircase, he proceeded along the narrow passage way till he was suddenly stopped by a wall, and concluding this to be the end of the wall, he is about to return, when a door opens as if by the wind, and entering, a glorious sight meets his gaze. The most brilliant radiance fills the place, and on examination Diomed perceives the cause; the arched roof is encrusted with natural crystals, as also are the walls, and the lamp, small though it is, suffices to light up the place. As he stands at the sight of so much apparent wealth, the taper falls from the hand of the slave, leaving him in utter darkness.

All through this dream Eudora had slumbered uneasily, and at the discovery of the manuscript a moan burst from her lips, and though her chained senses strove to free themselves and wake, they struggled ineffectually, and not the least motion was perceptible. But at this part of the dream it became confused, and the murderous malignance of Diomed further disguised by a malignant scowl, seemed bending over her, muttering, "Ha! ha! 'twas well drugged!" and then amid a mocking fiendish laugh, that rang through the chamber echoing and re-echoing, still it seemed as if the repetition would never cease, she awoke—and collecting all her energies with a desperate effort, convulsively sprang to her feet; with the rapidity of the lightning's flash, from that deep, dead slumber, she was standing in the centre of the apartment, wide awake, with every nerve thrilling with horror. She gazed wildly around; nothing met her eye but the pale moonlight flooding the garden, and shining through the casement with a hushed splendor. A stillness like the sleep of Nature was over all, occasionally broken by the rustling leaves, or the faint tinkle of the fountains wafted by the night wind for an instant, and then all was silent again.

Sleep being now out of the question, the excited girl leaned upon the lattice sill, and by degrees became calmer, but owing to the violence of the shock by which she had been awakened, the dream was remembered only to the discovery of the inner panel; here, when she recalled it, instead of clearly following the vision, it seemed to her Diomed vanished. Yet still the impression that it ended not here would intrude itself, but with the thought that the whole was caused by the preceding evening's events, she endeavored to dismiss it from her mind. As she sat by the open casement, many deep and earnest thoughts filled her mind: a religion so totally opposite from that in which she had been instructed, which her kindred inveighed against, and which her Julian regarded with horror, almost filled her with dismay. To tread a path unknown, to pretend to more wisdom than her elders, seemed like presumption in one so young. But presently there came over her soul a happy peacefulness, and she sought for her copy of the Scriptures.

By the moonlight she proceeded to the secret cabinet. What was her alarm at finding it open! Hastily lighting a lamp, she examined the closet; everything was displaced; the manuscript gone, and on the floor was a stiletto. Discovery now seemed certain, but by degrees her self-possession returned, and hurriedly unfastening the door, she fled like a shadow to Massena.

Bending over the sleeping slave, Eudora eagerly, but in a low voice exclaimed, "Massena! wake, wake!" Massena unclosing her eyes was much astonished by the presence of her mistress at that hour, and inquired what had happened.

"Rise and come with me to my chamber without delay," was the reply.

Massena hastened to obey, and when in the room with the entrance secured again, Eudora pointed to the open cabinet, saying: "We are discovered!" Massena's consternation exceeded description; but hoping for the best, she suggested that Eudora might have neglected to close it.

"No, no, I should not dare to be so careless—the manuscript is gone, besides here is proof I have not been the sole occupant of this chamber," Eudora replied, holding up the dagger. Massena eagerly seized it, exclaiming, "You were right lady in your suspicions regarding Diomed, for if I mistake not this dagger belongs to him."

"Sayest thou so? Then he must be punished; but no! We cannot, for to accuse him is to betray ourselves."

"Canst thou not tell him?"

"How without involving myself? A cause must be assigned, and besides it would exasperate him so that he would reveal what might otherwise be kept secret." A happy thought now occurred to Massena.

"He cannot read, of course, and seeing no other writing, took that manuscript believing it to be the desired article. Now I will casually remark that the lady Eudora has lost a valuable collection of poems, and as none of the slaves can read, the thief will be misled, and you will recover it."

"Very well! I leave it to thy judgment, Massena. But how could any one have entered the chamber? Thou knowest the door is a peculiar one, it can be unlocked from the inside only. And even supposing that possible, how could the person leave the room? The key was in the lock when I retired, and was the same when I awoke, how could any one have locked it from the outside?"

"To this argument no reply could be given, as it was evident the apartment could not be entered when the door was fastened, and no less so, that the thief must have departed as he entered, and as no one was in the room, he must have gone and locked the door by some mysterious means. But the more they conjectured the more puzzled they became, until at last they gave up the matter in despair, and Eudora determined before anything was done to consult Apollonius, and commenced atting herself for the purpose, when Massena reminded her that to be in the streets at that hour was unseemly. Eudora at once perceived it, and although anxious in the extreme, constrained herself to wait.

Morning soon came, and with a heavy heart Eudora descended to breakfast. The father seemed in unusually good spirits, and presently observed: "Several of our friends dine with us to-day. Paralus and his family, Adrian, and his kinsman, Otho, besides several others. Let all things, therefore, be prepared, and befitting the occasion," and then noticing the unusual paleness of his daughter he continued, "But what aileth thee, my Eudora?"

"It is nothing—I was disturbed by unpleasant dreams yesterday, and obtained but little rest."

"Sayest thou so? Do not overtask thyself this day, but rest, and let thy happy face speak for itself at my return." And the haughty senator gathered his robes closer as he swept onward to the temple of Jupiter.



